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ABSTRACT

This case study presents findings from a year-long ethnographic study of a suburban elementary school principal. It concludes one of seven studies conducted in elementary and intermediate schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings to investigate the instructional management role of principals. Although previous research offers disparate viewpoints about the potency of principals as instructional leaders and managers, this series finds that principals can significantly alter their schools' instructional systems and students' social and academic experiences. Using observations of principals' activities and interviews with students and staff, the seemingly chaotic behavior of principals may be construed as purposive. Activities comprise nine categories (goal setting and planning; monitoring; evaluating; communicating; scheduling, allocating resources, and organizing; staffing; modeling; governing; and filling in). The purposes or targets behind principals' activities include work structure, staff relations, student relations, safety and order, plant and equipment, community relations, institutional relations, and institutional ethos. Principal Jonathan Rolf's routine behaviors chiefly involved acts of communication; monitoring; scheduling, allocating resources, and organizing; monitoring; governing; filling in; and goal setting and planning. Rolf's primary target was work structure. In a contentious setting, Rolf acted as a buffer between teachers and parents and nurtured students oppressed by parental aspirations. His instructional leadership task was to maintain the status quo. (Contains 64 references.) (MLH)

EA

Instructional Management Program

ED 373 397

Understanding the Principal's Contribution to Instruction: Seven Principals, Seven Stories

Case #5: Jonathan Rolf, Principal of a Suburban Elementary School

David C. Dwyer
Bracha R. Alpert
Ginny V. Lee
Bruce G. Barnett
Nikola N. Filby
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November 1985

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UNDERSTANDING THE PRINCIPAL'S CONTRIBUTION TO INSTRUCTION:

SEVEN PRINCIPALS, SEVEN STORIES

Case #5:

Jonathan Rolf,

Principal of a Suburban Elementary School

David C. Dwyer
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ABSTRACT

This case study presents the findings from a yearlong, ethnographic study of a principal of an elementary school in an affluent, suburban setting. It concludes one of a series of studies in elementary and intermediate schools in urban, suburban, and rural settings undertaken to investigate the instructional management role of principals.

Although previous research has offered disparate views about the potency of principals as instructional leaders and managers, this series of studies has found that principals can significantly alter the instructional systems of their schools and thereby affect the social and academic experiences of students.

Through hundreds of hours of observation of principals' activities and through interviews with students, teachers, and principals about the antecedents and consequences of principals' activities, we have construed principals' seemingly chaotic behavior as purposive action. In our analysis of principals' routine actions, patterns emerge that reveal the importance of these actions in creating and maintaining instructional climates and organizations that can respond to an array of contextual factors.

FOREWORD

> In the past decade public educators have had to learn how to cope with three kinds of scarcity: pupils, money, and public confidence. Of the three shortages perhaps the most unsettling has been the decline in confidence in a profession that for so long had millennial aspirations of service to the nation. (Tyack & Hansot, 1984, p. 33)

Those of us who care about and watch our schools cannot help but notice that the buildings and the students have changed. We need only listen to the experiences that our children report nightly around the dinner table in order to conclude, not always happily, that things are different today. The media report violence in the schools, poor student achievement, and disappointing facts about the preparation and performance of teachers. And recently, a panel of educational leaders, appointed in 1981 by Secretary of Education Bell, concluded that our schools have deteriorated to such an extent that "our nation is at risk" (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

Into this troubled arena--into its very center--the school principal has been thrust by those who have studied "effective" schools (e.g., Armor et al., 1976; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Venezky & Winfield, 1979; Weber, 1971; Wynne, 1981). These researchers have successfully resurrected an old maxim: effective principal, effective school. Some proponents of this work have been very explicit about their faith in the capacity of the school principal. One supporter has asserted that:

> One of the most tangible and indispensable characteristics of effective schools is strong administrative leadership, without which the disparate elements of good schooling can neither be brought together nor kept together. (Edmonds, 1979, p. 32)

Thus, school principals find themselves in the spotlight, expected to shoulder successfully the awesome responsibility of school reform.

Is this a fair expectation? While the effective-school researchers have stressed the importance of the principal in the process of school improvement, other investigators have argued that the work of principals is varied, fragmented, and little concerned with the improvement of instruction (Peterson, 1978; Pitner, 1982; Sproull, 1979). Similarly, our own reviews of the effective-schools research have recommended caution about its conclusions (Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983). And at the very time that these scholars are proclaiming the potency of the principal as an instructional leader, principals themselves report decreases in their power and autonomy as school leaders. School administrators claim to make fewer decisions regarding instruction at the building level and they express feelings of isolation (Goldhammer, 1971). And as the theoretical debate continues, principals are being held accountable for students' academic performance and achievement scores. In some instances, parent groups are demanding the removal of principals who lead schools where children perform below expectations on standardized achievement tests.

The Instructional Management Program of the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development was created to examine critically the role of the principal in the development and execution of successful instructional programs. We began our work by questioning the common assertions of the effective-schools research. For example, as a basic query, we asked: If successful principals are those who create schools where the climate is safe and orderly, where basic skills are emphasized, where teachers hold high expectations for their students, and where instructional programs are tied closely to carefully monitored objectives, what do principals do to institute and maintain those conditions?

We began our effort to address this question with a careful review of an array of educational and organizational literatures. Subsequently, we suggested a theoretical model that related individual and contextual variables to the behavior of principals, and we speculated about how those behaviors might influence the instructional organization and social climate of a school and, in turn, affect student outcomes (see Bossert et al., 1982).

Guided by our theoretical conception, we then spoke with 32 principals from the San Francisco Bay Area about their work. These long, open-ended interviews produced a wealth of information about the principals' own perceptions of how their behavior as instructional leaders or managers was influenced by their communities, districts, and personal histories. These men and women described their schools' climates and instructional organizations and discussed their efforts to shape the form and the content of instruction and to color the ambience of their schools. From these preliminary forays into the worlds of school administrators, we received a very strong impression: Principals work under diverse conditions and pressures, and they pursue

solutions that affect instruction and student achievement in many different ways.

For us, the public's demand for the improvement of schools and instruction, the ongoing argument about the principal's role, and the promise we saw in the principals' own views about their activities merited an intensive effort to work with principals in their schools. As collaborators, we wanted to gain a realistic understanding of their role and of the limits of their responsibility in attaining more effective schools.

Probing the Workaday World of Principals

As a first step in achieving such an understanding, we invited five of the 32 principals whom we had interviewed to join us in an eight-week pilot study. Our purpose was to observe principals in action, validating their spoken stories on the one hand and gaining direct knowledge of their activities on the other. The five principals represented Blacks and Whites of both sexes from schools with diverse student populations, differing socioeconomic contexts, and varied approaches to instructional management. As we studied these principals, we were able to field-test our primary data-gathering procedures--the shadow and the reflective interview--which were to allow us access to the personal meanings that principals attached to their actions (the design and results of this pilot study are fully discussed in Five Principals in Action: Perspectives on Instructional Management, Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983). Our intent during this phase of our program's work was to listen to how principals described both their role in instruction and the conditions and events shaping that role.

After the pilot phase, we contacted 12 more principals, this time selected from urban, suburban, and rural schools, to help us extend our understanding of instructional leadership and management through a yearlong study of their activities. These individuals had all been nominated as successful principals by their superiors. They varied by gender, age, ethnicity, and experience. Their schools ran the gamut from rural to urban, small to large, poor to rich, traditional to innovative. For hundreds of hours we watched the activities of these principals, looking for the consequences of their actions for teachers and students throughout their schools. (See the companion volume, Methodology, for a thorough treatment of participant selection, data-gathering procedures, and analysis of data).

A Potent Role in Instructional Management

As we watched our experienced principals perform their daily activities, we also witnessed the uncertain environments with which they coped. We saw that the decreases in the number of students, financial resources, and public confidence to which Tyack and Hansot refer did have an effect on schools. In addition, we documented demographic shifts that moved students in

and out of schools at alarming rates; court actions that had administrators, board members, and teachers looking over their shoulders; and a changing political climate that affected the very conception of what schooling might be. All of these were significant factors in the schools in which we worked. The reality is that educators work in shifting environments that are difficult to predict. Further, there is no reason to believe that the conditions contributing to this uncertainty will disappear.

Against this backdrop, the importance of the principal's role and the limitations principals face became apparent. Figure 1 (see page v) illustrates the principal's key position, bridging context and school, policy and program, means and ends. The principal's importance emerges from that position. He or she has the greatest access to the wishes and needs of district leaders, parents and community members, school staff, and students. With experience and training, he or she has the best opportunity to formulate an image of schooling that is relevant and responsive to those groups and to begin to bring that image into being. We believe that this is exactly what our principals were about: Through routine activities they attempted to bring to life their overarching visions, while at the same time monitoring their systems to keep these visions relevant.

Our principals demonstrated their abilities to tap the wishes and resources of their communities and districts. We observed their capacities to be sensitive to the needs of their students and staffs. But what we found most impressive was their ability to create and sustain an image of what quality schooling might be. Through all of the uncertainty and conflict that characterized their environments, these principals worked to instill their visions in their staffs and patrons, defining a mission in which all might participate. We believe that this may be their most potent role.

Seven Principals, Seven Stories

From our yearlong study of the activities of principals in their schools, we have prepared seven case studies. Each study portrays how the principal is influenced by his or her context. Each study also describes how the principal set about improving or maintaining the instructional program in his or her school. Together, the studies demonstrate the complexities and subtleties of the principal's role. This series contains the stories of:

1. Emma Winston, Principal of an Inner-City Elementary School;

2. Frances Hedges, Principal of an Urban Elementary School;

3. Ray Murdock, Principal of a Rural Elementary School;

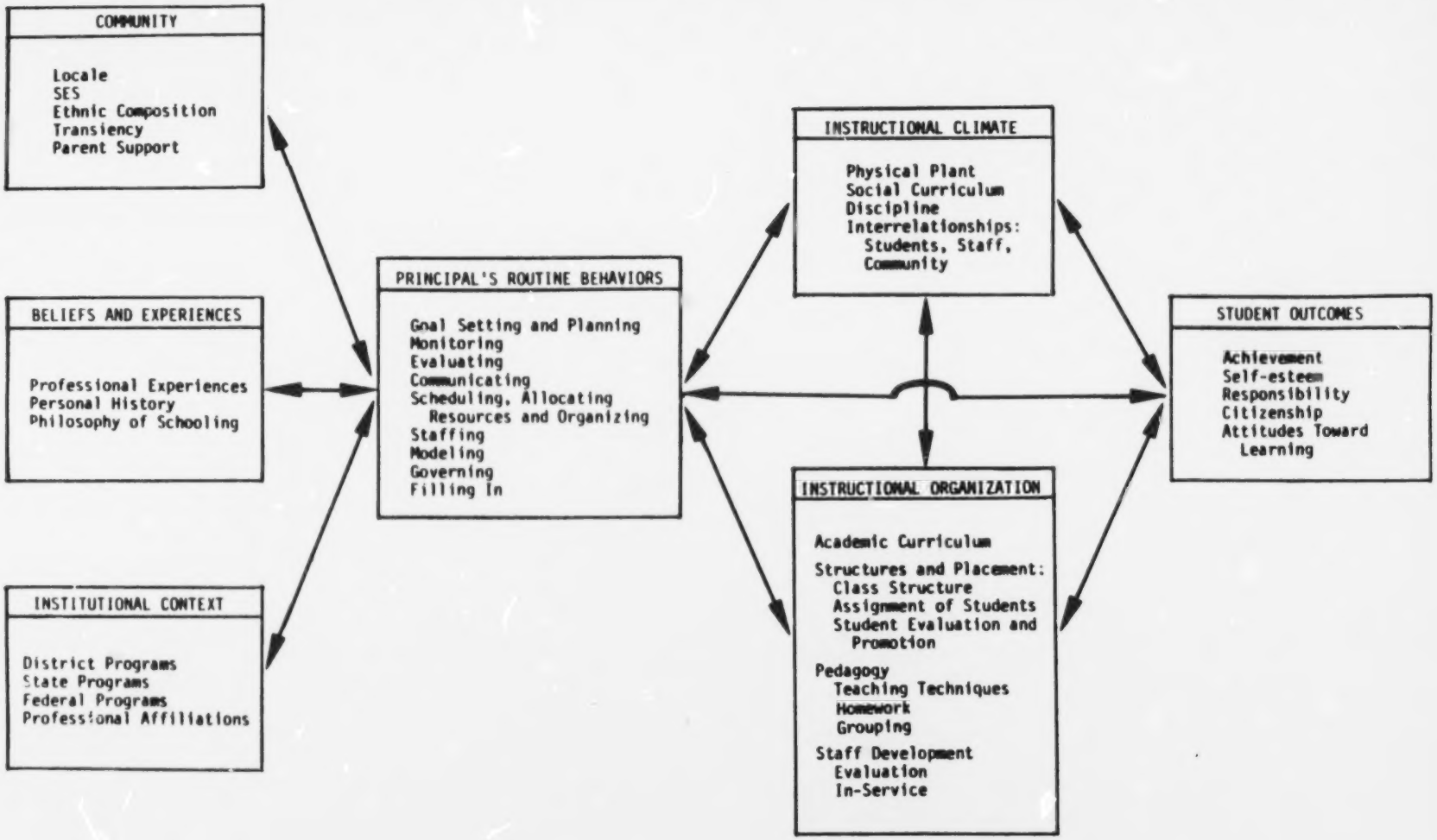

Figure 1: The Principal's Role in Instructional Management

Principals can understand and influence the varied elements of their organizations through the performance of routine activities. Their success hinges on their ability to connect their actions to an overarching perspective of their school settings and their aspirations for students.

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4. Grace Lancaster, Principal of an Urban Junior High School;

5. Jonathan Rolf, Principal of a Suburban Elementary School;

6. Florence Barnhart, Principal of an Inner-City Junior High School;

7. Louis Wilkens, Principal of a Suburban Elementary School.

These principals were chosen because of their outstanding reputations and their willingness and their staffs' willingness to work for a year under the close scrutiny of our field workers. We were able to learn about instructional leadership and management from each of them, although their contributions to instruction differed markedly. Some were directly involved with setting the conditions of instruction--that is, working with their staffs to define and coordinate the what, when, where, and how of instruction. The contributions of others were more circuitous or behind the scenes. From those principals, we were able to understand better how some principals can set the conditions for instruction, providing school environments that are supportive of teachers' work and students' learning.

It is important to note, however, that none of these principals is a superhero. Each man and woman made significant contributions in the context of his or her own school, but each carried the foibles and idiosyncrasies that in some form burden us all. Each struggled with the day-to-day realities of his or her own limitations--personal and contextual. The stories will elicit strong feelings within their readers about the relative merit of these principals' actions. Readers will compare one principal to another and, more importantly, to themselves. And therein lies the relevance of these studies.

These cases are not presented as models for others to emulate; on the contrary, they are intended to stimulate personal reflection and to illustrate several lessons that we learned from the hundreds of hours we spent with these men and women and from our own comparisons of their work:

1. **Successful principals act with purpose.** They have an image in mind of the "good" school and of a way to make their school more like that image. They use this overarching perspective as a guide for their actions.

2. **Successful principals have a multi-faceted image of schools.** They recognize that schools comprise many interrelated social and technical elements--from community concerns and district mandates to student/staff relations and instructional strategies. Successful principals stand at the vortex of these

sometimes competing elements, balancing and guiding their organizations toward their goals.

3. **Successful principals use routine behaviors to progress incrementally toward their goals.** Principals are busy people doing many things simultaneously. They design their routines to achieve their purposes. They work smarter, not harder.

4. **The IMP Framework, as it has evolved through the field work, illustrates these conclusions about successful principals.** This framework, shown in Figure 1, provides a useful heuristic device to help people understand the role of the principal.

5. **All principals engage in the same kinds of behavior.** The verbs listed in the "routine behaviors" box of Figure 1 were common to all the principals studied. Furthermore, these routine behaviors were used with similar frequency. Communication accounted for the largest proportion of each principal's actions.

6. **The form and function of principals' routine behaviors varies to suit their contexts and purposes.** Despite the similarity in the categories and frequency of principals' routine behaviors, the variation in their actions becomes apparent when principals are observed at work in their schools. The case studies illustrate this principle in detail, leading to the premise that there is no single image or simple formula for successful instructional leadership.

We believe that researchers, practicing principals, and educators planning futures in school administration will find these volumes provocative.

Although the cases portray seven unique stories, we have chosen to structure them along parallel lines to encourage readers to compare and contrast contextual antecedents, principals' actions, and consequences across them. Each will begin with an orientation to the setting, which describes the school, community, patrons, school staff, and principal. The introduction concludes with a narrative of a day in the life of the principal, enlivening the descriptive information about the school by illustrating how the principal deals with typical situations in his/her setting.

The second section of each study begins by delineating the social and academic goals held by the principal and staff in the school, then describes the elements of the instructional climate and instructional organization that have been created to accomplish those goals. Throughout this section, the role of the principal is underscored by the words of teachers and students from the setting, by the principal's own words, and by the observations of the field researcher assigned to the school.

The final section of each study analyzes the principal's activities, drawing information from the descriptive sections to build and support models that explain the direct and indirect strategies and actions employed by the principals to affect instruction in their schools.

One last note: We are aware of the long-standing debate about whether principals are best described as middle-level managers, coordinating people, materials, and time to meet their institutions' goals, or whether principals are best construed as leaders, wearing the lenses of their own experiences and values, sharing their visions of means and ends, and enlisting support to accomplish their goals. From our experiences with principals, we do not feel that the leader/manager distinction helps us better understand their work. We saw our principals act sometimes like leaders, sometimes like managers; many times, however, we could attribute either role to their actions. Reflecting the overlapping nature of these role distinctions in the day-to-day actions of principals, we use the words interchangeably throughout these studies.

Acknowledgements

There is a multitude of people to thank for their contributions to this extensive study. The principals, staffs, and students who freely gave their energy, graciously tolerated our presence, and patiently answered our questions over the period of a school year are first and foremost on this list. Our agreement to protect their anonymity, however, prevents us from listing these important contributors by name (all proper names used in the case studies are fictional). It is self-evident that the project would not have been possible without their goodwill and their sense of responsibility to our efforts.

Next, 11 research interns in three states spent over 1,500 hours in these schools. They trained and prepared for each phase of data-gathering, relentlessly applied each procedure, and performed the necessary and painstaking documentation procedures after each of their school visits and observations. All of the interns were graduate students who had to weave our program's research activities into their already crowded personal agendas. Alphabetically, they were: Bracha Rubinek Alpert, Steven Foster, Susan Goodwin, Albert Kuipers, Patricia Kunke, Maralee Mayberry, Barbara McEvoy, Gail Mladejovesky, Susana Munzell, Sherri Schulke, and John Wilson. The twelfth field researcher was Ginny Lee, a research associate of the Instructional Management Program, who wore multiple hats throughout the project, including site coordinator, writer/editor, and planning and training assistant.

An extremely competent secretarial staff, which included Sharon Hansen, Peter Grace, Ann Wallgren, Carrie Kojimoto, and Claudia Long, monitored and filed data, made sure that interns kept up with the necessary bureaucratic work, and transcribed--

painfully--a seemingly endless stream of interviews. The program would have floundered early on without their consistent support.

As the project's field phase was completed, several staff members took on new roles and additional staff joined the program to assist with the development of the computerized data base, analysis, writing, and/or final document preparation. Christine Baker, Jean Barker, Carrie Kojimoto, Claudia Long, Jeannie Lum, Barbara McEvoy, and Patricia Terry read and re-read hundreds of pages of data, assisted in the development of our tagging scheme, and entered text data into the computer system implemented by Patricia Terry. Bracha Rubinek Alpert, Jean Barker, Carrie Kojimoto, Claudia Long, Jeannie Lum, Barbara McEvoy, and Patricia Terry made invaluable contributions in the preliminary phases of the writing of the case studies. In the last critical phase, Jean Barker and Kenneth Warren wrote final copy and oversaw production of the eight-volume set.

My colleagues, Bruce Barnett, Steven Bossert, Nikola Filby, Ginny Lee, and Brian Rowan each contributed their expertise to the design and implementation of these studies. They, in conjunction with Carrie Kojimoto, assumed major analytical and writing tasks as our ambitions to fully utilize the rich data set grew and grew.

Lastly, the National Institute of Education funded this study during an era of tight resources, supported the program's efforts throughout, and helped create the visibility and professional networks that will ensure the use of this project's findings. Michael Cohen and Marianne Amarel were the project's monitors, and we especially thank them for understanding the utility of this kind of in-depth study and for supporting the project during every phase of its development.

David C. Dwyer
Project Director

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE SETTING AND ITS ACTORS

An Overview

This introduction attempts to give the reader a general impression of Larkspur Elementary School and its context. We believe that this overview is necessary if the reader is to understand fully the description and analysis of the instructional system presented in the subsequent section of this study. The introduction itself begins with an account of the physical aspects of the school and the surrounding community. This account is followed by a description of the school's parents and students. Next, the general characteristics of the school's teachers are delineated. The focus then turns to the school's principal, telling in brief his history, his educational philosophy, and his thoughts about the role of a principal. Having shaded in these broader contours, we subsequently take the reader through a day in the life of the principal, recounting in as much detail as possible what he encountered during a typical day at school.

The School and Its Context

Sitting prominently on the crest of a corner lot in the city of Bayview, Larkspur Elementary School was steeped in the atmosphere of its past. Built as a private school in 1915, Larkspur soon became a landmark for this stable, affluent residential area. Its U-shaped, two-story structure was made of smooth grey stones and age-darkened red brick. Vines of small-leafed English ivy climbed along the northern face, and moss grew in the shadowed crevices of the lower walls, which were bordered by a hedge of low-lying shrubs. The lawns, terraced and thick, were shaded by large oak and maple trees. All in all, the school complemented the architectural style of the houses in the immediate vicinity, which were impeccably maintained and, in some cases, impressively restored to the original condition of their English Tudor design.

The lower-grade playground reflected the well-groomed aspect of Larkspur. Carefully pruned rose bushes and rows of tulips lined the concrete court of this play area, which was nestled

inside the school's three wings (FN, 11/4/82, p. 14).* Larkspur's principal Jonathan Rolf personally supervised the landscaping, a duty which frequently led him to warn students not to damage the flowers during recess periods. Larkspur's upper-grade students escaped such restrictions by playing on a grass and pavement playground behind the school.

Inside the building, near the lower-grade play area, a large mural covered the hallway wall between the kindergarten classrooms. The mural was the work of Larkspur's primary-grade children. Its vibrant reds, blues, oranges, greens, yellows, and browns presented a cheery array of incongruent images which included a sunflower-filled, polka-dot caboose, blowing stars from its smokestack; smiling tomatoes and frowning cabbages, growing in gardens or hanging as ornaments on Christmas trees; whales confronting policemen on desert island sidewalks; and spaceships parked on rooftop launching pads. When asked, the student artists readily offered coherent interpretations of these surprising juxtapositions. Their pride in their work was shared by the school's parents and teachers. Even the maintenance personnel, who had originally opposed the painting, were pleased with the result.

The rest of the building's interior reflected early twentieth-century tastes. The staircases were marble with richly oiled banisters tracing their ascent to the second floor. The classrooms were high-ceilinged, spacious, and well-lighted (SO, 10/29/82, p. 6). Most had large windows along one wall, blackboards along another, and a sink, drinking fountain, and hallway door in the third. Multicolored bulletin boards covered the fourth wall. The first-grade classrooms varied slightly from the rest, having two hallway doors and large bay windows overlooking the front lawn.

The sway of architectural tradition at Larkspur was evident even in the school's newer additions. Recently, the west wing was extended to include a multipurpose room, a cafeteria with a full kitchen, and a moderately sized gymnasium. Though the

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*Throughout these sections, the reader will encounter parenthetic notations describing the type of data cited, the date of collection, and the page number of the record from which the quotation was taken. The abbreviations used to identify the data types are: FN for field notes; SO for summary observations; TI for tape-recorded interviews; I for interviews that were not transcribed verbatim; IOI for Instructional Organization Instrument; SDI for School Description Instrument; SFI for School Features Inventory; and Doc. for documents that were produced within the broad instructional system in which each school was embedded. (For further explanation of these varied data, see the companion volume, Methodology.) For example, a quotation taken from an interview on October 8, 1982 would be followed by: (TI, 10/8/82, p. 34).

interiors of these rooms reflected modern styles, their external brick and stone walls were designed to maintain the building's architectural integrity. Similarly, when the school's large windows were discovered to be poorly insulated, they were replaced with thermopane picture windows, which preserved the spacious view provided by the originals (FN, 12/3/82, pp. 11-12). The only other major change in the school's internal appearance was the addition of carpeting to all rooms except the cafeteria, auditorium, gymnasium, and hallways. The carpeting enhanced the building's atmosphere of luxury.

Larkspur's Students and Parents

Ninety-seven percent of Larkspur's 630 students were White. The remaining 3% were Native American, Asian, and Black (see Figure 2 below and SDI, 10/29/82, p. 2). Children from only 55 families (0.1%) received free lunches; students representing eight families (0.01%) were eligible for reduced-fee lunches. The principal said that this percentage was much lower than that for other schools in the same district.

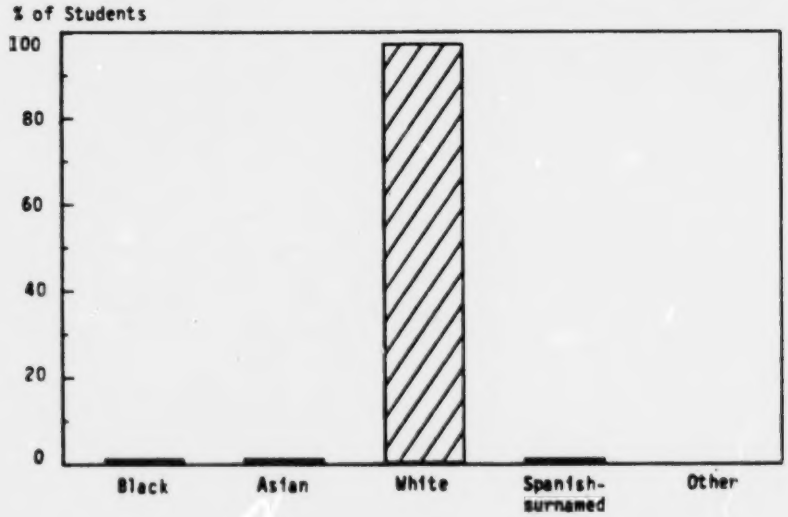

Figure 2: Student Ethnicity at Larkspur

Most of the parents were of middle-class to upper middle-class status, and many had graduated from Larkspur years ago (both the PTA president and the Community School Committee president were Larkspur alumni). A majority was professionally employed; only 5% of Larkspur's parents were classified as unskilled (see Figure 3 below).

Annual scores from the California Achievement Test showed Larkspur's students performing at or above local district norms (FN, 2/24/83, p. 7). For example, in 1982, Larkspur's sixth graders scored at a grade-level equivalent of 8.6 for the total

test battery. The composite sixth-grade score for the Bayview district was 8.0. In 1983, Larkspur's students scored at 8.0 for the sixth-grade total test battery, contrasting to the district's composite sixth-grade score of 7.9 (Doc., 9/12/83, pp. 2-3).

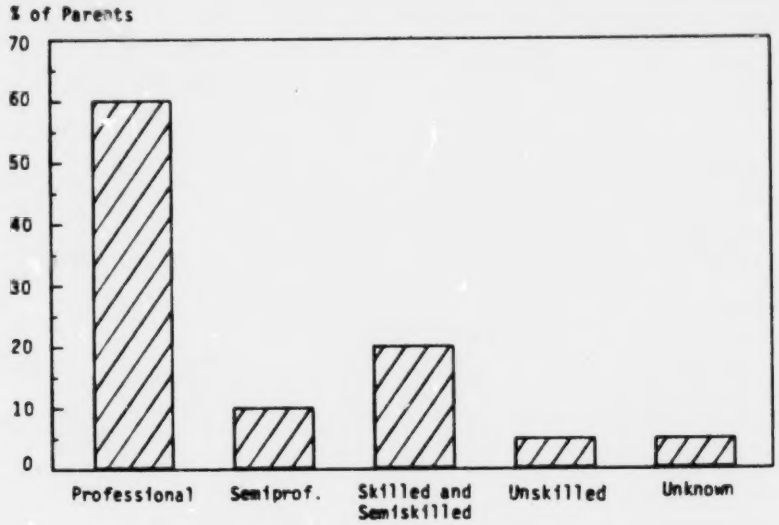

Figure 3: Employment Skill Level of Larkspur's Parents

Student turnover at Larkspur was very low. Only about 12 students transferred out each year. The principal compared this to an estimated average of 48 students per month in the west-side schools (FN, 12/3/82, p. 7), illustrating once again the stability of this community.

Larkspur's students appeared to be well cared for, clean, and fashionably dressed (FN, 11/4/82, p. 4). Most were assumed to be headed for college (FN, 11/11/82, p. 14) and conveyed a confidence and complacency about their future, as if they believed their success were assured (FN, 11/11/82, p. 14). They interacted well with adults and created few disciplinary problems (FN, 11/12/82, p. 14). They were, however, susceptible to behavioral problems stemming from self-imposed and parental pressure to achieve. When grades were assigned at the end of each quarter, many students experienced incredible stress, some even developing ulcers. They knew that their parents were apt to react strongly to less than excellent marks. According to the principal, some parents when confronted with a "B" on their child's report card would respond by exclaiming, "Now Johnny or Suzy won't be able to get into Harvard!"

Parents also contributed to their children's anxiety in less direct ways. For example, the principal believed that Larkspur's students were overprotected:

> The children are more than capable . . . but they seem so dependent compared to the children on the west side. They want to call their parents all the time to make sure they are doing okay. (TI, 11/4/82, p. 11)

The principal felt that this type of relationship tended to cripple the children socially (FN, 11/4/82, p. 11).

Nevertheless, over the generations, parents had shown a strong interest in what happened to their children at school. Frequently, parents lectured about their professions to Larkspur's students (FN, 12/2/82, p. 11). One group of parents voluntarily offered a twenty-hours-a-week class on computers. The computer had been purchased with funds raised in a reading marathon, exemplifying the type of activity and support common from Larkspur's parents (FN, 10/29/82, p. 8). Two more computers were soon to be added and installed in the school library.

Overall, the parents of Larkspur's students exhibited great concern for their children's successful performance at school. They believed that a life of prosperity could be guaranteed if their children did everything in the "right way." To ensure that their children conducted themselves accordingly, parents spent considerable time monitoring the school and participating in the decision-making processes. They often aired their views about school policies and practices at local school board meetings (FN, 4/29/83, p. 14), creating a climate of expectations which the principal and staff could not ignore. For example, parents preferred teachers who had a strong record for promoting high achievement scores, and they complained vociferously about those teachers whose students did not perform well on annual tests (FN, 4/29/83, p. 11). These demands had profound implications for Larkspur's staff. As the principal explained:

> The community is interested in this school. This has always been the emotion in this school. You'd kill yourself professionally if you were not able to meet the demands and expectations of this community. (FN, 2/24/83, p. 5)

It was within this atmosphere of high expectations that the school's staff worked to create a successful learning environment.

Larkspur's Teaching Staff

Larkspur had 22 full-time teachers, four half-time teachers, one half-time teacher for the gifted program, an orchestra teacher who worked at the school 30% of his time, and a full-time librarian (SDI, 10/29/82, p. 3). Teachers averaged seven and one half years at Larkspur and 17 years in the teaching profession (see Figure 4 below). Their classroom experiences varied widely: Some had taught at the same grade level for as many as 20 years

(I, 3/29/83, p. 1); others had taught at various grade levels at a number of schools (FN, 3/3/83, p. 9); and many had taught in both public and private schools (TI, 4/7/83, p. 2).

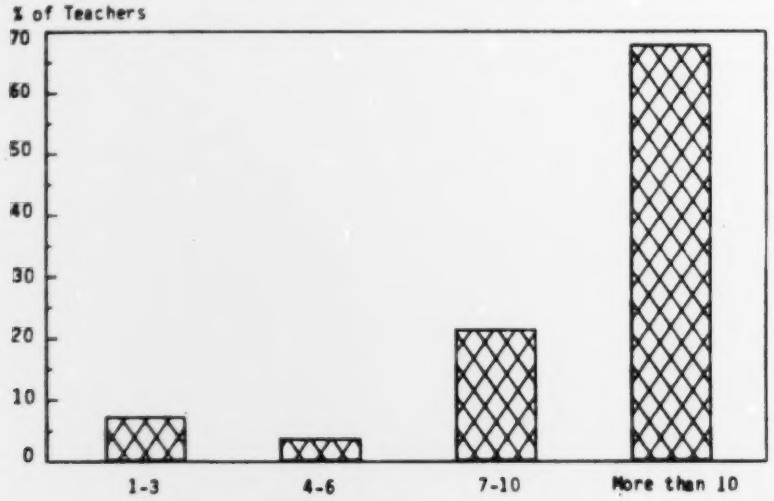

Figure 4: Years of Teaching Experience of Larkspur's Staff

Ethnically, the teaching staff was as homogeneous a group as the students they instructed. They considered Larkspur an excellent assignment because they believed that the area's wealth and stability meant that students would be well behaved (TI, 10/29/82, p. 17). The teachers generally spoke positively and energetically about their daily routines. Lunchroom conversations centered on local and world events, rather than on the negative aspects of the day (FN, 12/13/82, p. 2).

The staff's informal social structure was organized along grade-level lines and around a few outstanding personalities. The fifth-grade teachers were the strongest subgroup among the various grade levels. They worked together and shared many ideas relevant to their curricula. They also relied heavily on each other, showing mutual support at staff meetings. They all agreed that one of their primary tasks was to teach basic skills (TI, 4/8/83, p. 7).

A similar ideological bond united Mrs. Bonds and Mrs. Ralston, both of whom taught the low achievers and special education students in the fourth grade. Though surrounded by the dazzle of the school's success with high achievers, these teachers stressed the importance of their program with the fervor of leaders in a great cause (SO, 3/3/83, p. 9).

Two other teachers illustrated that polar oppositions were present in even this mostly homogeneous staff. Mrs. Tomazcek, a second-grade teacher, was a strong force in the school's informal social structure. She was the school representative to the

teachers' union, and at faculty meetings she often spoke for the majority of the staff about school affairs (FN, 3/7/83, p. 1). At the other end of the spectrum was the staff's outcast, a sixth-grade teacher who had legally changed his name to Batia (FN, 2/24/83, p. 3). Batia was an expert at performing African rituals and often wore African costume while teaching. He had, on occasion, dressed in brightly feathered headdresses, long, flowing robes, and jewelry made of unusual metals or animal bones and teeth (FN, 10/29/82, pp. 5-6). One teacher joked that he wouldn't put it past Batia to appear one day with a ring through his nose and bells on his toes. It was more than obvious that Batia was regarded and treated as a misfit by most of the other teachers, a role he readily played up to by teasing and by exaggerating his deviancy from the norms of the school (FN, 12/13/82, p. 2).

Except for Batia, there were few other deviations from the staff norm. The majority of the teachers at Larkspur believed that Principal Rolf buffered them from the community and the district administration (TI, 4/29/83, p. 3). They saw him as a protector, shielding them from the pressures and never-ending expectations of Larkspur's demanding community (FN, 2/24/83, p. 5; TI, 4/6/83, p. 7). Some teachers who had experienced conflicts with parents said that they would not be teaching at Larkspur if it were not for Rolf. Some even stated that if he left, they themselves might leave the teaching profession (TI, 5/6/83, p. 4).

On the whole, however, Larkspur's teachers felt positively about their students. They shared the principal's perception that the students were well behaved (TI, 4/7/83, p. 3). And because they were aware of their students' anxieties about achievement (SO, 4/14/83, p. 1), they did not view their students' aggressive, argumentative style as a measure of hostility. In fact, though they sometimes grew weary of the intense academic demands placed on them (FN, 3/3/82, p. 6), the teachers shared the community's vision of success and were pleased by high student achievement scores. Many said that they would not want to work anywhere else in the school district.

Larkspur's Principal

Jonathan Rolf had been a principal in the Bayview district for 10 years. Originally a business major at the local university, he never dreamed of going into education. But the immediate availability of a teaching job, the attraction of summer vacations, and a desire to stay in the Bayview area persuaded him to become a teacher. Rolf found that he enjoyed working with young children, so he remained in the profession for 12 years, spending one year as a reading specialist. Then his boredom with elementary curriculum and his dislike for his job as a reading specialist prompted him to work toward a degree in Elementary Administration and, ultimately, toward a principalship (TI, 10/29/82, p. 1).

At 44, Rolf was the youngest of the Bayview district principals. Visitors to Larkspur found a man of average height and build who greeted them with a warm smile and a firm handshake. His walks from classroom to classroom were taken with determined, almost hurried strides, yet he displayed a calm and easy manner when talking with students and staff. Teachers addressed him as "Jon" or "J.R." (FN, 12/3/82, p. 19).

Most of the time, Rolf wore his "uniform" of grey slacks, white shirt, navy blazer, and maroon or polka-dot tie (FN, 11/4/82, p. 9). Beneath this conservative exterior, however, Rolf harbored a quick sense of humor. He often joked about the inanity of everyday incidents at the school. For example, one day a stray dog was placed in a closet until a dogcatcher could arrive. The dog began to howl in protest. A parent entered the office shortly thereafter and asked whether the principal knew that a dog was in the closet. Seeing that the parent was "uptight," and aware that she might think that the teachers were not doing their jobs, Rolf explained the situation to her. After the parent left the office, however, Rolf commented:

> Everybody's scared to death that we don't know what we're doing. [Mimicking the absurdity of the parent's question about the howling dog] "Do you know you have a banana in your ear?" (FN, 4/29/83, p. 11)

Likewise, Rolf often joked with the students. On one occasion a kindergartner brought a note for the principal to read. Rolf took the note and pretended to read it, saying, "Please spank Nathan and send him home!" Nathan stared at Rolf in wide-eyed surprise. Rolf then asked the little boy, "Do you think that's what it says?" Nathan answered, "No." Rolf replied, "Oh, let me try again." And he proceeded to read the note correctly (FN, 11/4/82, p. 5).

Rolf was a master tactician in his social encounters and often succeeded in persuading others to adopt his decisions as their own. Although he found confrontations with parents stressful (FN, 11/12/82, pp. 1-5), his tension was controlled during conferences. Usually, he conveyed a calm that defused the parent's anger or frustration. Similarly, with staff and colleagues, Rolf promoted harmony by addressing them by name and by praising their suggestions and contributions (FN, 4/29/83, pp. 14-15).

Although Rolf was married and had four children between grades 4 and 12, he rarely discussed his personal life at school (FN, 2/24/83, p. 6). He did, however, allow his hobbies to enter into his professional life. He liked folklore and building model trains. He was also a very talented guitar player, and he knew a number of regional folksongs, which he frequently performed for students at all grade levels (FN, 11/4/82, p. 12). One year he even taught a mini-class on how to play the guitar.

Rolf saw himself as a role model for youngsters, exemplifying how children should behave and solve problems. He also saw himself as a negotiator, representing the students' interests to the various community factions having decision-making influence in school affairs. He quite literally considered the child as his client and himself as the student's advocate (TI, 10/29/82, pp. 6-7). Rolf claimed that he had never deviated from his beliefs about his role as principal, and he strongly disapproved of those principals who were less consistent than he (FN, 11/4/82, p. 3).

Rolf was sensitive to the quality of interactions between himself and his teachers. He wanted his teachers to feel that the lines of communication were always open. He believed that people should communicate often and, above all, be aware of how they communicate. As an example, he recalled an incident when he found himself quite irritated with a teacher who insisted on talking to him in the same way she spoke to her first-grade children. He not only objected to her tone in reference to himself, but also in reference to her students. He believed that students, no matter what age, should be addressed in a tone of voice that conveyed respect (FN, 12/2/82, p. 3). As a further example, he also said that the only time he and his wife had ever fought was when she talked to him in her "third-grade" tone of voice (FN, 11/11/82, p. 6).

Although he attempted to be fair to his entire staff, Rolf had definite favorites among his teaching staff, admitting a preference for the older, accomplished teachers who seemed able to adjust to the foibles and follies of the system (FN, 10/29/82, p. 6). He found the younger, less experienced teachers to be more demanding, and he believed that their lack of professionalism and their unwillingness to devote extra hours to their work at school detracted from the profession as a whole (FN, 3/7/83, p. 1).

Rolf maintained constant contact with the community and encouraged the parents to talk to him and the school staff whenever possible. He believed this was necessary if he were to be a successful principal. He said:

> I'm quite anxious to have community support. That's crucial to whether [this] principal will remain at this school. (FN, 11/12/82, p. 7)

He thought that the parents of Larkspur's students did support him and that their support contributed to a positive school climate. According to Rolf, climate was a key factor in school achievement because how children felt about their school helped determine how well they would perform (FN, 11/11/82, p. 8).

Overall, Rolf enjoyed the community and the students. He frequently said that he would not want to be anywhere else, and

that someday he would look back on his time at Larkspur as one of the highlights of his career (FN, 11/12/82, p. 13).

A Day in the Life of Jonathan Rolf

Principal Jonathan Rolf had developed a style of management that, in his opinion, brought to life his vision of what a school should be within the context of Larkspur Elementary School and its surrounding community. Some of the salient features of that context were: a mostly upper middle-class client population, a predominantly White student population, high community expectations for student achievement, and an experienced, mostly homogeneous staff. This section presents a typical day for Rolf at Larkspur as seen through the eyes of an observer who attempted to record only those incidents directly involving the principal. The "day" as it appears here is in reality a composite, made up of segments drawn from several different days. The incidents, however, are representative and create a vivid and accurate impression of life at Larkspur. This close-up view describes Rolf's interactions with students, staff, and parents, and it also illustrates how political, demographic, and financial factors influenced the actions of Larkspur's principal.

Every weekday morning at Larkspur Elementary School, Jonathan Rolf, the school's principal, dressed in his usual conservative attire, greeted teachers as they came into the main office. Rolf expected all teachers, upon arrival at Larkspur each morning, to read the "Daily Bulletin," a listing of the daily news and announcements, which Rolf posted every day. The room number of each teacher was printed on the left hand side of the paper, and when a teacher had read the bulletin, he or she checked the box next to the appropriate number. Today's "Bulletin" reminded the teachers that today was T-shirt day and that students would be wearing their "I Love Larkspur" T-shirts to class.

This morning, Larkspur's teachers also found another bonus in the office. Rolf had set up a slide projector and was showing slides from the "Pride in Larkspur Week" assembly, an annual PTA event that had taken place recently. As the teachers came in, Rolf made sure that each one viewed pictures of his or her own class.

At twenty minutes after eight, a substitute teacher came into the office to get directions to her classroom. Rolf got the room key and told her that he would accompany her to the room. On his way out, he congratulated a group of teachers whose students had done very well during the reading marathon. Rolf then showed the substitute to her room, gave her a brief orientation to the school's activities, and wished her good luck for the day.

The principal returned to the main office at 8:40 a.m. and took the slides and projector back into his office, where several wooden plaques with lacquered Union Pacific pictures and railroad slogans decorated one wall. Collecting railroad memorabilia was Rolf's favorite hobby, and his office decor reflected his

interest. Hanging on another wall was a photo of Rolf dressed as a train engineer. The photo had been clipped from the Larkspur History Book, Larkspur's version of a high school yearbook. A large train clock sat on one corner of his desk. Completing the furnishings in his office were three brown, overstuffed chairs arranged in a semicircle around the desk, and a large fig tree standing in a corner. A row of windows above a built-in cupboard provided Rolf with a view of the playground.

After he had put the projector away, Rolf sat down in his desk chair and began tuning his guitar. The kindergarten teacher had asked Rolf to play guitar and sing for her class this morning. Rolf enjoyed singing songs about railroads and American folklore to students. In fact, he had learned to play the guitar when he was a fifth-grade teacher.

His guitar tuned, Rolf walked down the hall into the kindergarten classroom and greeted the children with a smile. He began by singing "I'm Being Eaten by a Boa Constrictor," a song that called for fill-in responses from the children. Rolf immediately established a rapport with the students by joking and focusing on each child in turn. Then, with the skill of a polished storyteller, he told them a tale about Soldy Salderadus, a local folk hero. Rolf seemed to enjoy himself as he imitated the voices and accents of the different characters.

After thanking the students for helping him sing, Rolf left the classroom shortly before 10 o'clock and walked back to his office. He greeted a parent volunteer who was in the main office making phone calls to the homes of children who had been reported absent. Then he sat at his desk to look over some ideas for the "I'm in Charge" program, which would be discussed at the next night's Community Improvement Council meeting. One of the Larkspur mothers had developed this program in response to community fears following two child abductions in the state. The program taught students not to go anywhere with strangers and to notify someone if they were touched in ways they did not like.

The principal went out to the playground at 10:15 for recess duty. Rolf always took a share of playground duty because it was one time during the day when he could play with the students and get to know them better. The playground, located on the east side of the school, was grass and asphalt. When Rolf came outside, some third graders ran up to him and questioned him about the Iron Horse. Their teacher had been talking about the early trains and suggested that they seek out the principal for information. Being a railroad buff, Rolf was only too happy to share his knowledge with the children. He carefully explained to them that the Iron Horse was not a horse but it was the name the Indians had given to the first trains. While he talked, other students called out, "Mr. Rolf, watch this!" as they jumped rope, swung on the jungle gym, or performed other athletic feats. Rolf also kept his eye on the garden, which had several rose bushes, and was directly adjacent to the playground. Several times

during recess he had to remind students to stay out of the rose garden.

Another part of Rolf's daily routine was to inspect the boys' rest rooms. Leaving the playground at 10:20, Rolf looked into each rest room to be sure that the toilets had been flushed and that no one was hiding inside. Recently someone had been urinating on the walls, and Rolf checked to see if the problem was continuing.

At 10:35, he returned to his office and met a second-grade girl who had fallen on the asphalt. Rolf took her into the nurse's office where he put some antiseptic cream on the scrape and covered it with an adhesive bandage. He told the girl to be sure to come back if her leg continued to hurt.

Rolf then went to the lunchroom to get a plastic pitcher in which to collect money. Rolf was often involved in organizing special events to promote school spirit at Larkspur, and today the students were supposed to bring money to help pay for silk-screening the new flag of the Larkspur Unicorns. Each classroom was to have its own flag, and a large one was to be placed in the auditorium. The design for the flag had been selected during a recent contest in which students had submitted sample flag designs. The winner, a fifth-grade boy, had received a trophy for his efforts. Rolf's first stop was Mrs. Parson's first-grade class. As he passed the pitcher around, the principal thanked the students for remembering to bring the flag money and for wearing their "I Love Larkspur" T-shirts.

Several stops later, Rolf was in a third-grade classroom where a man was playing the piano and the students, seated in a circle, were lustily singing the Larkspur school song. The piano player was the song's composer, and his daughter was a student in this class. Rolf shook the man's hand and said that many people had praised the song. The principal said that he himself had visited classrooms with his guitar and taught the song to students. The man then sang another song called "Don't Cry in Your Beer: It'll Get Full of Tears and Then You'll Get Indigestion." Rolf listened to the song before continuing his rounds.

The principal met a parent in the hall who had books for a teacher and an "I Love Larkspur" T-shirt that her son had forgotten to wear that morning. Rolf took the books to the appropriate classroom and put them on the teacher's desk, and he took the T-shirt to the boy's classroom. He stopped again to inspect one of the boys' rest rooms and asked a student if he knew "who was wetting on the walls."

At 11:40, the principal went to the cafeteria to watch the students during lunch. Rolf always ate his lunch with the kindergarten, first-, and second-grade children. After the upper grades came in, he would walk up and down the aisles, talking and

joking with the children. Following up on some of the information he had gathered earlier, Rolf spoke to a third-grade boy named Charlie about missing the urinal and wetting the wall in the boys' rest room. Charlie said that he was not the only one who had done so and named some other boys. Rolf walked to the serving line where the three boys whom Charlie had named were standing. He told them that he knew that they were the ones missing the urinal and that they had better improve their marksmanship. One student admitted to wetting on the wall but said that he had done it only a few times.

At 12:20 p.m., Rolf went out to the playground. A fourth-grade boy approached him and said that the sixth graders were beating up his classmates. The boy led Rolf to where a group of boys was playing soccer. Rolf blew his whistle and told the sixth graders not to play with the fourth graders any more but to play instead with boys in their own grade. Using the same tone of voice that he used when talking to adults, the principal explained that the game was a set-up for the sixth graders since the fourth graders could not compete equally with the older boys. As the group dispersed, Rolf walked over to the jungle gym apparatus and praised a girl who had climbed to the top. Then he stopped a fifth-grade boy and told him that he had heard that the boy had been using improper language. The boy replied, "Yeah, I gotta clean up my act." Rolf answered, "I know you can do it."

The P.E. teacher then reported to Rolf that children were running in and out of the rest room. As the bell rang at 12:50 p.m., signalling the end of the lunch period, Rolf walked over to the bathroom and stood in the hallway. He greeted the afternoon kindergartners as they filed by, all the while keeping a close eye on the bathroom. It wasn't long before a child came running down the hall toward the rest room. Rolf stopped him, saying, "Aha! I caught you. No running."

When Rolf returned to the main office at one o'clock, he found a parent sitting on the couch, waiting to speak with him. The woman wanted to observe two classes in order to decide which teacher might be best for her child next year. The principal told her that he had expected her the day before. The woman disagreed, saying that she was sure that she had written it down correctly and that today was the day they had agreed upon. With some irritation, Rolf said, "Okay, what classes did you want to observe?" He had become accustomed to parents "window shopping" (as he called it) for their children's classes. The woman gave Rolf the names of the two teachers whom she wanted to observe. Rolf answered, "Okay, follow me." He went into the first classroom and spoke with the teacher, whose response indicated that she was somewhat irked by the request. Rolf stepped out of the classroom and told the woman to go in but not to disturb the class. Rolf then walked down the hall to the second classroom and told the teacher that a parent would be coming in to observe for a minute. He apologized for the intrusion but explained that the woman had gotten her days mixed up.

Rolf returned to his office at half past one and began writing at his desk. He was working on Larkspur's nominations for the "Hope of America" awards, which, he commented to the secretary, were due two weeks ago. He worked for about half an hour until he was interrupted by two students who reported a fight involving two fourth-grade boys. After finding out what room the boys were in, Rolf wrote a note to the teacher asking to see the boys who had been fighting. He gave the note to the students who had reported the incident. After the boys had left with the note, Rolf reached for the 3x5 card file that sat on the corner of his desk. Whenever a student was referred to the principal for breaking school rules, Rolf recorded on the card the day, the offense, and what action he had taken. He kept these cards for the entire school year.

Soon three boys entered the principal's office. After determining that one boy was just an observer, Rolf said, "Well, then, maybe you better go. We'll work this out among the three of us." The boy left, and Rolf turned to Avard, one of the fighters, and requested that he recount what had happened. During this time, the other remaining boy, Harper, looked very angry and upset. Avard said that Harper had come up from behind another boy, Matt, and kicked him. As Avard explained what happened, Harper doubled his hands into fists and tried not to cry by fiercely blinking his eyes. The principal, meanwhile, sat back in his chair listening. He rephrased Avard's account and asked the boy whether his summary was correct. Avard agreed.

Rolf then said that two honest boys could solve this problem. He turned to Harper and asked, "Have you been picking on Matt this year?" Harper just stared back at the principal and finally said, "Not much." In a calm and unhurried manner, Rolf explained that there was a difference between playing and teasing. "Was it fun for both of you?" he asked. Harper did not reply but looked down at the floor. Rolf responded that he had not yet called Matt into the office, but now he was going to do so.

Avard was dispatched to get Matt, and the principal sat back and watched Harper. In a kind tone, he said to the boy, "I think, in general, Harper, don't play with Matt Crockett." Harper did not answer but relaxed his shoulders at the principal's calm tone of voice. Matt then came into the office and told his version of the story. Initially, Harper denied that he had kicked first, but then said that he had "sorta kicked" but only because Matt was making fun of his name. The principal replied, "That surprises me because you have one of the most famous names in the country." Then he explained to both boys that he did not expect to hear of any further problems between the two of them. After taking down Matt's name (he already had a card on Harper), Rolf extracted a promise from both that when they had problems, they would think and talk it out rather than hit it out. Harper and Matt agreed and left the office.

At 2:10, the "window shopping" parent came into the main office and told Rolf that she wanted to fill out the form for

teacher requests. The principal took out his clipboard as the woman, with the self-assured air of one who expects to get what she wants, said, "I made a request for Mrs. Parsons last year and I've been very pleased, but I need to make sure that my child continues to have a good school experience." The woman said her child was very bright and needed stimulation. Rolf explained to her that a committee composed of two teachers and the PTA president handled the requests. He further explained that she might not get the requested teacher unless there was a clear and pressing need for her child to have a particular teacher. Priority was not given to requests that were made simply because the parents would be more comfortable with a particular teacher. The woman replied that when she took the trouble to come in and observe the classrooms, the least the school could do was to give her the teacher she wanted. Rolf again explained the policy, adding that Larkspur was one of the few schools that even attended to parent requests, but that special needs, not parent preferences, determined where children were placed. Taking care to maintain eye contact with the parent, Rolf said that it was nice to have parents come in and make requests, because it showed him that the parents cared about their child and the child's education. As the woman stood up to leave, Rolf thanked her for taking the time to come in and talk with him.

When school let out at 3:30 p.m., Rolf went outside and said good-bye to the students and chatted with parents as they came to pick up their children. Larkspur was the only walk-to school in the city, and consequently Rolf did not have to supervise students boarding buses as did his other colleagues. By 3:45, the students were gone, and Rolf was back in his office, typing the "Daily Bulletin" for the next day. When he finished, he went out to the main office to post the bulletin. The phone rang. He answered it and took a message. Then he walked down the hall to the first-grade classroom to give the teacher the message. This task completed, Rolf, as he did every day after school, ran a mile and a half around the track. He then went home to unwind in his hot tub.

Summary

Larkspur Elementary School was located in a community with a tradition of strong parent support and involvement. Situated on the outskirts of the city of Bayview, the school served a predominately White, middle-, and upper middle-class population. These families believed in the importance of early childhood education for their children's future. This belief led the parents of Larkspur's students to demand that the school's principal and staff promote high student achievement. Although Larkspur's teachers sometimes expressed annoyance with parental expectations, they tended to share the values and goals of their client population.

Principal Jonathan Rolf functioned as a buffer between teachers and demanding parents and sought not only to shelter teachers but to maintain parental support for the school's

program. As a result, he enjoyed strong community support as well as the confidence of his teaching staff. In fact, many teachers believed that they could not have survived at Larkspur without their principal, who was a binding force at the school. In the words of one teacher, it was Rolf who "[held] us together" (I, 4/7/83, p. 6).

THE PRINCIPAL AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL SYSTEM OF THE SCHOOL

In the previous section, we introduced the reader to the school's setting, staff, and clients. We also attempted to bring our descriptions to life by allowing the reader to walk the halls with the principal, observing events as he experienced them. In this second portion of our study, we describe the elements of the school's instructional system, and we recount the manner in which the principal's activities influenced, or failed to influence, each aspect. Again, our purpose is to reveal the role of the principal in the complex task of managing instruction at the building level.

The array of elements that we describe as parts of the instructional system may surprise some readers, for we envision the instructional process as involving much more than didactic interactions between teacher and student. The technical and social aspects of instruction are created, to a great extent, by teachers and students in classrooms, but instructional processes are affected directly and indirectly by social and organizational features of the school itself. The school, in turn, is affected by its larger context. For example, opportunities and constraints for participants in schools derive from state and federal regulations, districtwide programs and policies, as well as from circumstances imposed by the communities within which schools reside. In addition, each participant in the schooling process brings to a building or classroom his or her own history of experiences and his or her beliefs. These personal and idiosyncratic elements of school organizations also greatly influence the nature of instruction and student experience (Dwyer, 1984). In the first section of this study, we illustrated how these factors interweave to form the context in which we view principals' behaviors and the consequences of those behaviors.

But to describe completely--or even satisfactorily--the complex blend of individuals and contexts that make up a school, we must, in some rational fashion, untangle policies, programs, individual proclivities, services, operating procedures, and even building designs. In order to accomplish this analysis, we must make distinctions, slicing organizational wholes into arbitrary and discrete pieces. The problem with any such dissection, however, is the artificial creation of categories. In the day-to-day events in the schools of our studies, no such distinctions occur; boundaries blur through multitudes of interactions and

interactional effects. Nor can our "surgery" be guided by previous work. Prior research has failed to set forth a single, generalizable model of schools--the successes of the extant models are hinged to the specific purposes of the authors' analyses (e.g., Charters & Jones, 1973; Dunkin & Biddle, 1974; Gowin, 1981; Metz, 1978; Smith & Geoffrey, 1968).

Our strategy in facing this problem is twofold. First, whenever possible, we have allowed our incisions to be guided by the practical sense of the principals and teachers with whom we worked, using those categories mentioned frequently by them or used by them in planning. Secondly, in order to illustrate the permeability of our categories, we have taken every opportunity to describe how the different parts of our model affect one another. The unavoidable consequence of this latter tactic is some redundancy. We hope the reader will be understanding and patient.

This section, then, begins with a description of the overall goals of the school and proceeds to an examination of the social or climatic factors supporting or interfering with realization of those goals. It also describes the technical or organizational aspects of instruction at the school that either harmonize or clash with those goals.

Larkspur's Social and Academic Goals

John Dewey (1916) asserted that as a society advances, the need for formalized education increases. Knowledge grows exponentially, its accruing bulk rapidly outpacing any single individual's capacity or opportunity to gather it all firsthand. Schools, in response, are appointed to pass on the experiences, achievements, and values of a society and to prepare individuals to contribute to the advancement of knowledge. As a result, children, through schooling, come to link the past to the future. Schools also serve a custodial purpose. Children constructively occupied as learners permit their parents the freedom to earn a living and secure a home. This multitude of purposes and responsibilities often finds expression through the social and academic goals that principals and teachers set for their students.

Social Goals: Although academic achievement was considered by community members to be the bottom line for success at Larkspur, Principal Jonathan Rolf emphasized social goals as much as, if not more than, academic outcomes. His general philosophy of schooling combined academic and nonacademic concerns. Rolf stated:

> We need to have them [students] capable in reading, we need to have them able to do this, that, and the other in math. But I think what we're trying to do is to prepare them for adulthood, [and to] be useful citizens. (TI, 10/29/82, p. 6)

For Rolf, making Larkspur's students useful citizens meant making them aware of and proud of their culture, community, and school. Consequently, Rolf's actions were geared toward building positive attitudes toward the school. With the PTA's support he organized schoolwide events to build student pride. The Founder's Day program (FN, 2/24/83, pp. 1-2) and "I Love Larkspur" week were two such events. During "I Love Larkspur" week many students wore "I Love Larkspur" T-shirts (FN, 11/4/82, p. 1; FN, 11/11/82, pp. 7-8), learned the Larkspur school song, which had been composed by one of the parents (FN, 11/11/82, p. 5), and collected money for the school's flag (FN, 11/11/82, p. 7) and for tree planting (FN, 4/29/83, p. 7).

The school's teachers seemed aware of Rolf's interests. One teacher said of Rolf:

> Oh, I know he [Rolf] thinks the basic skills are very important, but he also thinks that, you know, the culture of the people are important, too, and he has a good sense of, the history of [the state] and how we should appreciate it. I think he thinks . . . children should have respect for their parents, for authority, for the physical plant, for the community. He wants the students to be proud of the school, so he's always working toward things that will make them feel that way, feel pride. (TI, 4/7/83, p. 4)

Teachers not only were aware of Rolf's interests but also followed his lead in stressing social outcomes. According to another staff member:

> I almost think that values and habits are more important to teach than actual concepts. I feel that the values do come from the home, but a lot of them are getting ignored. And that's what I like to focus more on, work habits and having a child develop responsibilities--responsibility for himself--[and] take some of the pressure off the teacher and off the parent. I feel those are more important almost than the academic concepts. (TI, 5/5/83, p. 1)

Many of the teachers expressed a great concern for the self-images of their students (TI, 3/24/83, p. 1). And most of their nonacademic goals involved developing their students' values and characters. One teacher explained:

> Because some of our children are so much advanced compared with the normal . . . I find that every child has some little thing that they can do during the reading session that

> gives him confidence. It's the confidence I'm working for. (TI, 2/25/83, p. 1)

Another teacher related to us her concern for the development of character by saying:

> I think a good attitude is very important for students to learn. I teach art so I think art is a very important thing. People need to appreciate beauty around them and know how to observe it and to do what they need to do with it. I think that's very important. [Also] good citizenship . . . I think the whole person is very important to me. (TI, 4/7/83, p. 1)

This teacher's mention of good citizenship further indicated that Rolf's concerns for social goals were shared with his staff members.

Rolf also promoted social goals by seizing every opportunity to praise students and the school. At a school concert, he introduced the Larkspur orchestra as "the best grade-school players" he had ever worked with (FN, 12/16/82, p. 2). And at an assembly that included parents of Larkspur's children, he told students, "I hope you know that you are outstanding kids at an outstanding school" (FN, 2/24/83, p. 10).

Rolf's tactics in building school pride had a definite academic purpose as well. He said:

> If I build a lot of pride in going to Larkspur school and [persuade students that] this is the greatest school in the world, that's going to reflect on how well they [students] do on the achievement tests. (TI, 10/29/82, pp. 18-19)

And although other teachers did not mention achievement tests specifically, they, too, suggested possible academic outcomes for their social activities. For example, one teacher believed that making education "meaningful" for students at her grade level would motivate her students to learn. She said:

> I just feel that [children] should . . . just, come liking to learn, wanting to learn, very curious. And I feel that it's very, very important that you convey that it's not necessarily what you're learning but that you're enjoying it and that it's meaningful. If it's not meaningful, then, you know, the children really don't learn, so my criteria when I'm looking through phonics books and language and math books is: Is it meaningful and is it going to be something that the

> children can use? And if it isn't, then we usually don't do it. (TI, 4/8/83, p. 2)

In this case, a teacher's concern about nonacademic goals influenced her determination of academic content. In other cases, teachers acknowledged that making children feel safe and comfortable in their learning situation was a prerequisite for successful learning (TI, 3/24/83, p. 1; TI, 4/14/83, p. 8; TI, 4/29/83, p. 1).

Some teachers slightly reversed the formula, using academic methods to effect social outcomes. The two teachers who co-taught a remedial education class had the following to say:

> Our class is a combination of re-ed [remedial education] and moral ed. We both have been regular classroom teachers and we both have the same philosophy--that the behavior of children changes with the experience of success. (FN, 3/3/83, p. 1)

For these teachers, academic success had a social and behavioral payoff. Similarly, another teacher had structured her classroom curriculum so that successful achievement of academic goals would require attending to nonacademic concerns as well. She explained:

> Each student has his or her own set of tasks to do. We contract with them at the beginning of each teaching section to determine what goals are best for each kid. They know what they have set and that it is their responsibility to get the work done. If they drift off, or play, then they don't get the work done. We are trying to train process as well as task skills. (FN, 3/3/83, p. 3)

The schoolwide curriculum also included various mini-courses as part of "curriculum enrichment" (TI, 10/29/82, p. 6; FN, 11/12/82, p. 10; FN, 12/3/82, p. 8). During the year we were at Larkspur, the mini-classes focused on safety education, a subject that was of particular concern to the community. Programs dealing with such topics as child abductions, personal safety, fire safety, and safety from harmful substances were presented at the school. Rolf contended that "if you can save just one kid by making them a little bit more world-wise, it's worth it (TI, 12/3/82, p. 11).

Academic Goals: As stated earlier, academic success at Larkspur meant having students perform at, or above, grade-level expectations. District policy stated that grade-level skills in all basic subjects should constitute the bottom line of success. A districtwide test given in April of each year measured how well teachers were instructing students in the required skills. In reaching that goal, teachers used the various sets of objectives

in the textbooks, which were themselves selected from a list determined by the district's textbook selection committee. The staff's awareness of the importance of academic achievement can be demonstrated by the fact that when asked about their educational goals, most of Larkspur's teachers named developing academic basic skills as the most important goal (TI, 3/24/83, p. 1; TI, 4/6/83, p. 1; TI, 4/7/83, p. 1; TI, 4/8/83, p. 1; TI, 4/20/83, p. 1; TI, 4/28/82, p. 1).

However, the mostly upper middle-class parents of the school's children expected more and exerted great pressure on teachers to make students achieve at even higher levels. Teachers tried to keep up with this challenge, and in many classes students had learned the required skills for their grade level well before the April districtwide tests. In some cases, the students then went on to material from the next grade level. The school also had a number of programs to push students toward excellence: a spelling bee (FN, 2/24/83, pp. 7-12), a reading marathon (FN, 11/4/82, p. 2), a "reflections creativity contest" (FN, 1/5/83, p. 6; FN, 1/10/83, p. 2; FN, 1/11/83, p. 1; FN, 2/24/83, p. 10), and a talent show (FN, 11/4/82, p. 4).

This push for high achievement did, in its way, link academic goals to social goals. As seen in the discussion of the school's social goals, the emphasis that Larkspur's parents placed on academic achievement also made teachers very much aware of the need to set social goals. Both Rolf and his teachers believed that, in order for students to do their best academically, they would have to learn self-pride, self-confidence, and develop a strong sense of community.

At Larkspur, academic success was very much tied up with student progress in the social sphere. And as Jonathan Rolf summed it up, making students successful was the ultimate goal of the school:

> I'd say maybe what we're trying to do here is help these children reach their maximum capabilities and prepare them--give them the tools to get further education, go out and face the world. I guess we're just trying to prepare these kids and give them everything they need to have to be successful in life. (TI, 10/29/82, p. 6)

The following sections describe how the principal and staff of Larkspur Elementary School strove to implement their goals, working to create a productive instructional climate and instructional organization. In previous work, we identified climate and instructional organization as avenues along which principals could work to shape and improve their schools (Bossert et al, 1982). During our collaborative field work with principals, we continued to find these two concepts helpful in organizing the multitude of events, processes, and structures that we encountered in schools. Our definitions, however,

changed to accommodate our expanding experiences. Again, the importance of these two concepts to our study of the instructional management role of principals is that they illuminate many of the strategies employed by our principals to accomplish the goals they established for their schools.

Larkspur's Instructional Climate

In our study, we treat school climate (a notion embraced by all of our participating principals) as an observable and changeable characteristic of schools. For our principals, climate encompassed both physical and social elements. Changing a school's climate could mean anything from painting the walls to organizing the way students lined up at recess. The comprehensiveness of the concept can be grasped from one principal's comment: "School climate starts at the curb." In general, our principals perceived climate as a diverse set of properties that would communicate to students that schools are pleasant but serious work places designed to help students achieve. In the following account of Larkspur's instructional climate we will describe: a) the physical aspects of the school plant that promote or hinder the accomplishment of social and academic goals at the school; b) the social curriculum--activities designed to promote positive relationships within the school, student self-esteem, and productive attitudes toward learning; c) the school's discipline program; and d) the nature of the interrelationships among all members of the Larkspur learning community.

Physical Components: Unlike schools in financially strapped districts, Larkspur could usually find the funds to repair and replace items around the school building when they were no longer useful or had deteriorated. All the classrooms had been recently carpeted (FN, 4/29/83, p. 3), and when it was determined that the large picture windows in the school were poorly insulated, they were replaced with thermopane windows (FN, 11/4/82, p. 29). Nonetheless, despite the overall excellent condition of Larkspur, Rolf spent a great deal of time keeping tabs on the school's building and grounds.

Larkspur's principal made daily patrols of the campus to ensure that building and grounds were kept clean and were being properly maintained (FN, 11/11/82, p. 11; FN, 11/12/82, pp. 8-9). While patrolling, Rolf took note of small irregularities in the building and corrected them. For example, on one occasion he discovered that the fire alarm had been taped in such a way that it could not be used. He removed the tape and then checked with the custodian about the incident (FN, 2/24/83, p. 3). He also made sure that children did not play in off-limit areas such as the rose garden.

Students and teachers were aware of Rolf's interest in properly maintaining the grounds, and they routinely brought maintenance matters to his attention. One teacher told him that some kids had been urinating on the wall in the boys' rest room,

and Rolf went in search of the boys involved. Another teacher sent Rolf a note saying that there were mice in her classroom, and Rolf, taking the custodian with him, went to the classroom to check (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 9, 15). During another tour of the building, Rolf found pieces of glass on the playground. After picking up the fragments, he asked students what had happened. They told him that neighborhood "delinquents" often smashed their beer and pop bottles on the playground (FN, 11/11/82, p. 11).

Teachers sometimes turned to Rolf regarding the cleanliness of their rooms and hallways. In one case, a first-grade teacher wanted Rolf to ask the custodian to clean the tops of the students' desks. Since this was not within the regular custodial duties (according to Rolf, other teachers cleaned the desks themselves), Rolf used school funds to pay the custodian for this job. Later, however, he did express some doubt about whether he had taken the right action (FN, 11/12/82, p. 1). Another teacher complained to Rolf about dirty hallways and leaves on the floors (FN, 11/11/82, p. 23). Rolf also responded to a complaint about fleas in a classroom carpet and to a request for dishwashing liquid (FN, 11/4/82, p. 9).

Rolf routinely inspected any construction going on in the building, and he also checked into the school's various utility systems. When a classroom was being remodelled, he was sure to drop by often. In order to apprise the district of problems in the heating system, Rolf evaluated the system himself (FN, 12/3/82, p. 11). And when the district set up a program to have the fire marshal visit its schools, Rolf inspected Larkspur's alarm and fire precaution system (FN, 4/29/83, p. 4).

Rolf was also active on special projects to improve the school's physical appearance. He went from room to room collecting money for tree planting at the school (FN, 4/29/83, p. 5). Occasionally, he even rolled up his sleeves and moved furniture. When new classroom desks arrived, Rolf gathered some student volunteers to measure and group the desks according to height (FN, 12/13/82, p. 1). He then organized the desks by classes and told the children to get their new desks and leave their old ones in the gym (FN, 12/13/82, p. 3). On another occasion, Rolf, with the assistance of another male teacher, moved a piano from a classroom to the library for a teachers' luncheon (FN, 11/12/82, p. 1).

Rolf's efforts to improve the school's facilities were described by one teacher as follows:

> Well, I think he's working very hard to get some of the things in the school that we've needed, like new furniture and a new auditorium, and some of those things that we've been very badly in need of. New furniture--we've had this old stuff for so many years--and he's really gone all out to make improvements in the school, in the

> structure of the school . . . getting the new shrubbery outside and new windows. He's really accomplished a lot. He likes the appearance. (TI, 4/28/83, p. 4)

The principal's domain also included taking care of, and keeping track of, the school's audiovisual equipment and office supplies. Rolf examined the staging and sound system in the auditorium for the spelling bee (FN, 2/24/83, p. 1). When the librarian needed the record player, Rolf went to the fourth-grade teacher who was using it and asked if she could do without it for awhile (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 6-7). In order to acquire a new film projector for the library, Rolf looked up the appropriate regulations for ordering one (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 4-5). He was also planning to get a video machine and tapes for a science fair (FN, 4/29/83, p. 5). When the old copy machine broke, Rolf ordered a new one (FN, 2/24/83, p. 7).

In summary, Principal Rolf spent a fair portion of his time supervising the school's building, grounds, and equipment. He assisted with repairs and helped maintain the cleanliness of the physical plant. He assumed the responsibility for these tasks, and he was the one to whom staff members turned when a need arose.

Social Curriculum: Just as a neat and clean environment filled with interesting and colorful materials can encourage children to get involved in school and think more positively about it, the very words, mannerisms, actions, and activities of staff members may communicate to students a staff's level of commitment to, and concern about, children. These cues, conscious or not, may influence students' perceptions of their own efficacy and of their "belongingness" within their school and classroom communities (Brookover et al., 1973; Fuller, Wood, Rapoport, & Dornbusch, 1981; Getzels & Thelen, 1960). These aspects of school climate make up the social curriculum of a school. Most of our participants believed that this curriculum was important in attaining the school's social and academic goals.

Teachers and principals often think about social curricula in terms of discipline programs or extracurricular and structured activities in which children assume responsibility and exercise some authority. Student councils, student hall monitors, or student crossing guards are examples of activities that might be included under the social curriculum. In addition, teachers may give children classroom time to share personal problems or individual successes with their peers. Teachers might also use classroom activities to promote social goals for children. This section explores several aspects of Larkspur's social curriculum and discusses how each supports or hinders the school's social and academic goals. Larkspur's discipline program, however, will be addressed in a subsequent section.

As described in our discussion of social and academic goals, Principal Jonathan Rolf's most important social objective was to promote positive student attitudes about the school. For Rolf, this sense of pride was a basic condition for achieving other goals. Thus, in describing his role, Rolf said that "a principal is a booster of his school and a booster of his kids" (TI, 11/12/82, p. 7). Rolf played an active role in programs designed to increase school pride. As we have seen, he helped the PTA to organize "I Love Larkspur" week, and he collected money for the school flag.

Equally important as these more programmatic aspects of Rolf's participation in the school's social curriculum were his informal contacts with students. Rolf took advantage of every possible opportunity to praise the children and the school, often encouraging everyone to "give ourselves a hand" (FN, 2/24/83, p. 10).

To increase the frequency of his opportunities to interact with students, Rolf regularly supervised students during recess, often taking an active part in their games. He explained his reasons as follows:

> I have always taken a share of the playground duty, and I look forward to that because that's the only time I have to play with the kids and get to know them a little bit. Otherwise, you're just an office worker. You don't have much validity with the kids. They don't know who you are or what you are. (TI, 11/4/82, p. 26)

The children seemed to appreciate Rolf's interest in their activities. Students often called to the principal to watch them as they performed athletic feats (FN, 11/4/82, p. 14). They eagerly answered his questions about their games (FN, 11/4/82, p. 15; FN, 12/2/82, p. 1), and they took advantage of his presence on the playground to ask him questions about trains (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 14-15). Rolf further encouraged their interest by visiting classrooms to sing, play guitar, and tell stories on railroad history.

The principal also used the time he spent on the playground to model proper social behavior. Seeing a student who did not appear to have anyone to play with, Rolf took time to play a game with that student (FN, 11/11/82, p. 11). When watching student games, the principal insisted on "fair play" and made sure that proper game rules were being observed (FN, 11/4/82, p. 22; FN, 11/11/82, p. 12).

Rolf's efforts were supplemented by those of his teachers. Some promoted student self-confidence through verbal praise and individual feedback when they returned students' work (FN, 1/5/83, p. 1). Others took advantage of routine teacher-pupil

interactions to praise students and promote their self-confidence.

Formal social curricula at the school focused on student safety, student self-confidence, and responsible work habits. Mini-courses at the school during the year of our observation emphasized student safety and making students aware of the danger of child abduction (FN, 12/3/82, p. 11).

In the classroom, teachers used various means to promote student self-confidence. For example, in one class a staff member showed a video tape that featured a dialogue between two boys trying out for the basketball team. During the show, one boy "sells" himself to the coach by stressing his own strong points and by challenging the coach to a game. When the tape had finished, the teacher emphasized the message of the film, saying:

> If you don't believe in yourself--if you don't--nobody else will. If you know you can, you can. You have to have faith in yourself. Anyone will believe in you if you believe in yourself. (FN, 4/7/83, p. 4)

Another teacher routinely punctuated her lessons with wrong answers in an attempt to get her students to think for themselves. One day, for example, after the teacher had given the class a wrong answer, a student raised his hand to correct her. The teacher responded, "Oh, so your teacher was wrong. Let's work at it again." In explanation, she said that she wanted to make students pay attention and think critically about their work in class (FN, 1/5/83, p. 1).

In the classroom for low-achieving and learning disabled students, social activities were used to promote academic achievement. In a scholastic atmosphere that stressed academic achievement, students in this group might have tended to become discouraged. One teacher said, "The kids all know what group they are in, and they know if they are in the low group, and the pressure to move up is incredible" (I, 3/3/83, p. 1). The teachers gave each student a prize when he or she had completed the task that had been contracted. The teacher also threw parties for students who succeeded in meeting their goals.

The school's academic competitiveness, however, did somewhat compromise some schoolwide attempts to acknowledge improvement by low-achieving students. An annual year-end award assembly provided an opportunity to acknowledge high academic achievement and general improvement by students. Prior to the year of our study, however, the awards commending students for good behavior or improvement had been dropped. When asked why, a teacher responded:

> It was a lead balloon. Didn't go over too good. The kids who were commended for improvement were still a year behind. Even if

> they made a year's gain, the other kids knew it was a bunch of crap. We dropped that idea like hot potatoes. Usually, the same kids are commended over and over anyway. (SFI, 4/6/83, p. 6)

Basically, Larkspur's students were aware that commended students were still performing below grade level and that the acclaim they were receiving might have noted improvement but not academic merit. The other students knew that the awards were a gesture to "psychologically support" the efforts of low-achieving students (SFI, 4/6/83, p. 6).

In summary, the social curriculum at Larkspur built upon the framework of school pride that Principal Rolf strove to erect. Rolf and his teachers, through their day-to-day activities, sought to translate school pride into a feeling of safety and self-confidence. A student population already characterized by academic success was encouraged to observe the rules of fair play, to think and talk about their own activities, and to think critically about what they were being taught. But, as the school's decision to drop awards commending improvement and behavior indicates, academic success was still the touchstone for student self-image at the school.

Discipline: Although the administrators and teachers in our study included discipline as an important part of a school's social curriculum, the emphasis that they placed on the topic underlies our decision to give student discipline its own section in this report. In giving prominence to the question of discipline, the participants in our study were acting in accord with opinions expressed by scholars throughout the history of American education: For example, William T. Harris (1908) linked school discipline to the "moral education" of the country's children; Abraham Maslow (1954) theorized that children had to feel secure--the consequence of being in a safe environment--before they could devote energy and attention to higher order learning; and recently, and just as emphatically, researchers of effective schools have added their voices to the continuing concern about student deportment (Armor et al., 1976; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Venezky & Winfield, 1979; Wynne, 1981).

Each year, Principal Rolf issued a bulletin to teachers describing the school's policy on discipline. Chief among these formal guidelines were two dicta: "No corporal punishment" and "Don't keep kids after class." Underlying these two pronouncements was the general disciplinary atmosphere of the school. That is, some of the disciplinary burdens at Larkspur were indirectly alleviated by the highly competitive spirit of the students and by their parents' attitudes toward high achievement. This is not to say that Larkspur had no disciplinary problems; there were both positive and negative aspects to this emphasis on success. But to some extent, discipline in many classrooms was controlled indirectly because students were intent on getting good grades and scoring well on

tests. Their motivation kept these students self-disciplined and on task during the classroom periods.

Children sometimes responded to parental pressure to do well by being more cooperative with school staff. Some kids would "do anything" to keep the teacher or principal from calling their parents about some act of misconduct. Thus, some of the more extreme aspects of student discipline like corporal punishment and after-school detention were unnecessary.

Nonetheless, Rolf had an established routine for dealing with disciplinary problems. As we saw earlier, he recorded all disciplinary incidents on 3x5 cards, which he kept in a small file. After gathering the pertinent information, Rolf discussed the problem with the student and tried to solve it without involving others. After a second offense, Rolf suspended the student. Before the student could be reinstated, his or her parents would have to come to the school (FN, 11/4/82, p. 27; SFI, 2/25/83, p. 3; SFI, 3/6/83, p. 3; SFI, 3/29/83, p. 3).

Rolf described his own attitude toward disciplinary problems in the following way:

> I do tend to not be really arbitrary with kids. I do tend to say, well, we have a problem. This behavior can't go on. Here's some things we can do about it: You can stop. We can make you stop. We can expel you from school. I think I do kind of work with kids on a disciplinary basis that way. (TI, 10/29/82, p. 15)

Yet, though Rolf maintained a fairly strict disciplinary policy at Larkspur, he sometimes made exceptions to the rules. He took into account the particular circumstances surrounding a child's actions, and he proceeded accordingly. For example, Rolf had written "Don't call parents" on the card of a student who had been sent to the principal's office more than three times. Rolf had done this because he knew that the student's mother beat her son often. Further reporting of misconduct at the school would only have imposed greater hardships on the boy (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 28-29).

Rolf's attempt to keep in mind all aspects of the boy's situation when disciplining the child was, in a sense, indicative of the principal's general approach to discipline. In making his decisions, Rolf tried to consider the student's relationships with other students, the student's relationships with his or her parents, and the dictates of school policy. Rolf explained:

> I think that the thing that I most want to avoid when I work with kids in conflict is the charge that I didn't listen to both sides. I listen to each youngster tell me their version of the story without any interruptions from

> the others. Then I try to synthesize together all the pieces that all the kids agree on so that I begin to get a picture of what actually happened. . . . I want the kids to feel that I listen to all sides and that I don't have my mind made up and that I'm not prejudging them before they come in. . . . Many times the kids . . . will solve the problems themselves. Many times, just listening solves the conflict. I try not to play a conflict as the victim and perpetrator. If I do, the victim gets it later from the others. . . . A lot of times the kid will say, "Oh, please don't say anything about that." And I don't. (I, 11/4/82, p. 20)

Rolf's mention of problem solving in the above statement should be noted, because problem solving was one of his preferred methods of handling disciplinary incidents. The principal often used this technique to resolve conflicts on the playground. Each time, he listened to the various versions of the incident without interrupting, and then he helped the students to agree on a solution (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 16, 23, 26, 27; FN, 11/12/82, p. 12). When a student's guilt in a conflict was clear, Rolf checked the student's card to see if the student had committed any prior offenses. Once, he accepted the student's promise not to repeat the behavior (FN, 11/11/82, p. 12). Another time, Rolf did not hesitate to impose punishment by instructing the student to write a 200-word essay (FN, 12/3/82, p. 2).

Although more serious incidents were rare, Rolf did handle occasional fights. Some were reported to him by students (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 23, 27; FN, 11/12/82, p. 8; FN, 2/24/83, pp. 1, 3). Others he witnessed and interceded in during his routine patrolling of the building and its grounds (FN, 11/4/82, p. 26; FN, 12/2/82, p. 1). The principal also interceded when sixth graders were beating up fourth graders during a soccer game. Rolf told the older kids to challenge people in their own age group (FN, 11/4/82, p. 22). Afterwards, the fourth graders sent letters to Rolf expressing their gratitude for his action (FN, 11/11/82, p. 10). Other disciplinary incidents which Rolf handled included snowball-throwing on the playground (FN, 12/3/82, p. 9), climbing in a dumpster (FN, 11/4/82, p. 23), and running in the hallway (FN, 11/4/82, p. 23).

Teachers generally took responsibility for discipline within classrooms, but when a problem behavior persisted, they sometimes referred the student to Rolf (FN, 11/17/82, p. 6; SFI, 4/6/83, p. 3; SFI, 4/28/83, p. 3). Once a problem was referred to him, however, Rolf insisted that the teacher not tell him how to handle it (FN, 11/11/82, p. 12; FN, 1/27/83, p. 2). Rolf explained:

> I have written into the policy of the school that if a teacher sends a kid to me then it

> becomes my problem to solve as I see fit, and I don't want the teacher telling me what to do about the problem. I am the one who decides on the punishment. I am not going to be a stand-in act. It is my baby from then on. (FN, 11/11/82, p. 13)

At least two of the teachers we interviewed, however, did not seem to be aware of Rolf's attitude. They claimed that in most cases they prearranged a solution with the principal (SFI, 4/28/83, p. 3; SFI, 4/29/83, p. 3).

In Larkspur's classrooms, teachers used a variety of techniques to control students' conduct and behavior. For example, one teacher, upon noticing that a student was not working on task, complimented the student who sat next to the disruptive child and who was working intently. This seemed to inspire the disruptive child who immediately began to work again at his problems. The teacher then quickly added, "I really like the way Jim got back to work" (FN, 3/3/83, p. 1). Another tactic used by this same teacher was to place behaviors in their proper places by indicating that certain activities should be reserved for certain periods. For example, when she heard a student humming a tune, this teacher remarked, "I'd appreciate it if whoever is humming would wait until music" (FN, 3/3/83, p. 3). Another teacher responded to students' misconduct by drawing the attention of the whole class to the individual student's misconduct, but doing so in a playful way by making jokes. In this way, the teacher kept the criticism lighthearted and helped the class to relax during intense test-taking times (FN, 5/7/83, pp. 2-3).

Other teachers controlled student behavior by pointing out that misconduct inconvenienced the teacher and the entire class. For example, one teacher who had reached her limit with classroom noise told students that they all deserved a quiet, restful room in which to work (FN, 3/7/83, p. 4). Another teacher scolded a student by saying, "I'm not going to let you ruin it for the whole group. If you don't stop talking, you will be excused" (FN, 4/14/83, p. 5). A similar strategy used by teachers was to ask for sympathy. One staff member told her class:

> This [misbehavior] does not make me feel good. We are working on this problem and only a few are concentrating.

The teacher asked the class to make her feel good by being alert (FN, 3/7/83, pp. 8-9).

Not all of Larkspur's teachers used creative approaches to discipline students. For example, one would simply say aloud to the class, "Do I hear talking?" Her method, however, was unsuccessful because many children would respond by whispering, "Yes" (FN, 3/5/83, p. 4). On one occasion, the teacher

complained, "That's five times for directions, kids," only to hear a student respond, "How about six?" (FN, 4/6/83, p. 2).

Other teachers used direct means of discipline in their classrooms, announcing to the whole class, "You gotta stop talking," or "I want your attention!" Some teachers attempted to embarrass students by making specific addresses, such as "Are you listening, Susi?" (FN, 4/6/83, p. 2) or "Eric, if you don't stop talking, you will be excused" (FN, 4/14/83, p. 5).

One teacher made deals or exchanges with her class: "I guess that your seating is okay as long as you control yourselves" (FN, 4/12/83, p. 1). Another used the countdown method: She began with the number five and expected students to become silent before she had reached one (FN, 5/13/83, p. 2). Another teacher used this same method to get the students to think of the consequences of their inconsiderate actions. Still another related discipline to work outcomes. When the class got noisy, the teacher shouted, "Hey, quiet! I'm not gonna talk until you listen and if I don't talk, you aren't gonna get this done in time" (FN, 4/12/83, p. 1).

A common and often-used disciplinary technique at the school was to threaten punishment for misconduct. "Okay, class, if there is talking, you know what will happen" (FN, 4/13/83, p. 1). This technique was often used in concert with behavior modification strategies. For example, one teacher took away or awarded points toward a fun period on Fridays, depending on student behavior (FN, 4/6/83, p. 7).

In fact, behavior modification was especially prominent in the primary grades where teachers used such rewards as stickers and free pencils to reinforce quiet work on task (FN, 4/19/83, p. 7). In the low-achieving class, teachers rewarded students for high marks on tests and for good conduct. These rewards helped to keep student morale up and to encourage student self-discipline. One teacher gave individual rewards and occasional whole-class parties for those students who successfully learned subtraction skills (FN, 3/3/83, p. 3).

Another teacher kept track of the amount of time it took the children to settle down when they returned from recess, P.E., or lunch. Those minutes were then subtracted from the amount of time allotted for an end-of-the-month party (FN, 4/14/83, p. 2).

One teacher linked discipline in her classroom to everyday routine behavior and made explicit rules of behavior upon which all of the children could agree.

> We made a rule that they have to ask us first before they can leave their seats to go get a drink, or sharpen pencils, or go to the bathroom. Of course, if they can't hold it, they can run to the bathroom, but they have to ask first if they can. (FN, 4/19/83, p. 2)

Another kept a list of rules posted on the class bulletin board. These rules not only included guidelines for instructional behavior, such as "Pay attention," but also included rules for social and personal conduct, such as "Be kind" and "Be neat" (FN, 3/7/83, p. 5).

A couple of teachers took time each day to help students relieve some of the tension arising from tests or from just sitting in their seats all day. They felt that doing so minimized the disciplinary outbursts that might occur if students were not given enough "space." Students were directed to engage in deep breathing exercises when the noise level in the class increased. The students stood by their desks, took deep breaths, stretched, and loosened up their bodies (FN, 3/7/83, p. 8).

Another teacher used a game to reduce tension. When students became anxious and were not working intently on task, she made them stop their lesson and skip around the classroom for a minute or two. At intervals, she called out "now" for all of them to fall to the floor. If they did not fall on time, then they had to return to their seats (FN, 4/19/83, p. 7). This same teacher also created extra special tasks for students to do when they had finished their daily work assignments. One such assignment was making birthday cards "so they [students] won't get too frustrated" (FN, 4/19/83, p. 8). One of the second-grade teachers had devised an interesting technique for getting the class to quiet down and focus on the day's assignment directions. She began by standing up in front of the room and making a series of hand motions: First, she held her arm out in front of her, then she bent it at the elbow, opening and closing her hand, and touching her head. The class quieted down and began to watch her and follow along. When all the kids were following along, she put her arms down and then began the instruction period (FN, 5/4/83, p. 1).

Parent involvement at Larkspur often led to problems for Rolf and his teachers when they wished to deal with student misbehavior. Rolf gave the following example:

> If a parent calls me and says that their kid is being picked on, I tell them that I will call both into the office and wail on both of them and tell them that it's got to stop. In that way, I protect the victim. Now, these things don't always go smoothly. A lot of times one parent will think that I picked on their child, start repercussions and be angry. Many times, parents go after each other and want to get the school involved. But relatively there isn't too much of that at this school. (TI, 11/4/82, p. 20)

Though Rolf tended to downplay the problems created when parents became involved in the disciplinary process, teachers noted difficulties especially in regard to keeping disciplinary

records. One teacher reported that parents viewed record keeping as a way of picking on children. Because of this attitude, the teacher no longer kept records of student misconduct (SFI, 4/28/83, p. 3). Instead, she made mental notes, but often she found this strategy ineffective because when repeat offenses indicated a need for more serious actions on her part, she had no records to justify her tactics (TI, 4/25/83, p. 1).

Consequently, teachers differed in the extent to which they wrote and kept records about student misbehavior. Those who kept records describing a student's offense showed them to the parents or the principal only when it became necessary to do so (SFI, 2/25/83, p. 3; SFI, 3/29/83, p. 3; SFI, 4/7/83, p. 3; SFI, 5/6/83, p. 3). Some teachers did not keep records about misbehavior at all.

One of the teachers kept records but only when dealing with children who needed special placement or when dealing with hostile parents. She coordinated her disciplinary records with those of the principal so that when parent conferences did arise, both of them would have some evidence upon which to base their recommendations (TI, 4/29/83, p. 1). She made sure to record both positive and negative incidents. To avoid direct confrontations with parents, she sent notes home with the student rather than calling parents on the phone. She also said that many of the more difficult parents often volunteered for work at Larkspur, and she made a point of making positive comments to them when she saw them (TI, 4/29/83, p. 2).

In summary, students at Larkspur were usually well behaved, and discipline was not one of the school's major problems. When children did misbehave, teachers usually handled the problem within the classroom. Serious or repreat offenses were referred to the principal. In dealing with discipline at the school, Rolf demonstrated both assertiveness and consideration. His problem-solving strategy had educative motivations, yet it was also carried out with an awareness of how Larkspur's parents responded to the way the school handled students in critical situations.

Interrelationships: An important element of the climate of schools is the nature of the interrelationships among the members of the school community: the parents, staff, and students. The quality of these day-to-day relationships may be the best evidence of the cohesiveness of a group in its commitment to the organization's goals. Positive relationships among the stakeholders in a school demonstrate fundamental agreement and satisfaction with the means and ends of the organization--agreement that has an effect on the organization's ability to carry out its mission (see Homans, 1950; Janis, 1972; Maslow, 1954; Zander, 1977).

At the risk of redundancy, we will say again that strong <u>community</u> involvement greatly influenced the activities and behaviors of all participants in Larkspur School. The staff and the principal worked hard to satisfy and attend to parents'

expectations. Rolf explained the importance of being the kind of principal who could maintain good community relations:

> The special need for this kind of principal in this kind of community is because the parents are so articulate and are influential in the community, and if there is something that they are displeased about, everybody will know about it . . . so maybe I feel a little greater need for that here, because I'm anxious to have the community support. That's crucial to whether the principal will remain at this school. (TI, 11/12/82, p. 7)

This strong community involvement stemmed from the fact that many parents themselves had studied at Larkspur when they were younger and therefore perceived themselves as part of the school (FN, 2/24/83, p. 4). Although parents of Larkspur's students contributed to the school in a variety of ways, their demands and expectations put a great deal of pressure on Rolf and his staff. As mentioned earlier, Rolf believed that "you'd kill yourself professionally if you were not able to meet the demands and expectations of this community" (FN, 2/24/83, p. 5).

The parents, however, also enhanced the school's program. The PTA board met regularly and organized programs for teachers and students. They held a luncheon for the teachers at the conclusion of a teacher-parent conference week (FN, 11/11/82, p. 2) and presented a movie to the student body on Thanksgiving (FN, 11/12/82, p. 4). Parents planned the "Founders' Day" program (FN, 2/24/83, p. 15) and a cultural program called "Around the World in 23 Rooms" (FN, 1/10/83, p. 2). The PTA put together the Larkspur History Book (FN, 11/11/82, p. 2) and helped to introduce computers to the school (FN, 11/11/82, p. 3). A surprise birthday party for the principal was another activity initiated and carried out by the PTA board (FN, 1/11/83, p. 1).

Individual parents contributed to the school in various ways. One parent organized a "star reading project" (FN, 11/4/82, p. 2). Another wrote the Larkspur song and taught it to the students (FN, 11/11/82, p. 5). Other parents volunteered to teach mini-classes on various topics during the year as part of the enrichment curriculum (FN, 12/3/82, p. 7; FN, 1/11/83, p. 2).

Parents also volunteered to assist teachers in the classrooms. The teachers, especially in primary grades, reported having parent volunteers in their rooms several times a week (SFI, 2/25/83, p. 6; SFI, 3/29/83, p. 6; SFI, 4/6/83, p. 6; SFI, 4/8/83, p. 6; SFI, 4/29/83, p. 6; SFI, 5/6/83, p. 6). One teacher of a first- and second-grade combination class said that a parent lectured regularly to her kids on different topics and another parent helped to correct papers (SFI, 4/29/83, p. 6). Another first-grade teacher had two "room mothers." One coordinated social affairs and the other did all the clerical work (SFI, 4/8/83, p. 6).

But parental involvement at Larkspur was not always so supportive. Parents often caused extra work for the principal and staff. Occasionally they made special requests regarding assignment of their children to classrooms. According to the principal, all requests were made upon specified forms and then referred to a committee composed of two teachers and the PTA president. The committee determined whether academic or social concerns indicated that a particular assignment was called for or whether the parent had simply heard that a particular teacher was good (FN, 4/29/83, pp. 1, 11). Before making requests, parents often came to observe classrooms (FN, 4/29/83, pp. 3, 11). Rolf did not discourage this practice and welcomed parents when they came to observe. On one occasion, however, he became annoyed when a parent dropped in unexpectedly to observe a class. The parent had been scheduled to visit the school on a different day, and Rolf had to ask the teacher to accept the parent in her class (FN, 4/29/83, p. 3). When, after the visit, the parent came to Rolf's office to make a request, the principal explained to her the procedure for requests. He was careful to point out that not every request could be honored, but he reassured the parent that all teachers at the school were good (FN, 4/29/83, pp. 11-12).

Parental requests for specific teachers for children were not uncommon at Larkspur. A sister of one of the first-grade teachers called Rolf to ask that her two first-grade children be placed in her sister's accelerated classroom (FN, 11/12/82, pp. 1, 4). She thought they were not being sufficiently stimulated in their present classrooms. Rolf did not think the children were academically ready for the accelerated class, but he did manage to reach a compromise with the parent. As he talked with the parent, Rolf seemed somewhat anxious, reflecting, perhaps, the bind that parents often placed him in by making special requests (FN, 11/12/82, p. 8; TI, 12/3/82, p. 5). On another occasion a parent, who also happened to be a judge, wanted her son assigned to the accelerated program. The principal agreed that the child was qualified for the program and made sure that the boy could immediately be placed in the accelerated classroom (FN, 11/12/82, p. 7).

Some evidence indicated that teachers and parents did not always live up to each other's expectations. At a faculty meeting, in response to a PTA request for more volunteer time from teachers, many staff members asked for compensation time and more pay. According to Rolf, "They were very concerned that their time was being negotiated and contracted without their consent or knowledge" (FN, 3/7/83, p. 1). Rolf appealed to the teachers to consider their PTA obligations as professional ones. Two-thirds of the teachers expressed opposition. A teacher said:

> [Mr. Rolf] is in a very real bind. If he can't get the teachers to do all the wonderful things that the community expects from its school, he fails in the view of the community, and, as he has said, that is "suicidal." (FN, 3/7/83, p. 2)

Most teachers regarded teacher-parent conference week as one of the hardest weeks of the school year, because of the stress involved in confronting about 9-10 parents a day (FN, 11/11/82, p. 2; FN, 11/12/82, p. 2). In fact, one afternoon, a teacher cancelled her teacher-parent conference when, according to Rolf, the stress became too much for her (FN, 11/11/82, p. 14). Being aware of the pressure under which teachers worked, Rolf often acted as a buffer between teachers and parents. He worked hard to preserve harmony between these two groups. According to Rolf, parents had a certain inborn hostility toward the teachers, and teachers were naturally suspicious of parents (TI, 10/29/82, p. 8). To give an example of the nature of the relationship, Rolf described a teachers' meeting during which teachers expressed frustration because parents were sending their children to school very early in the morning, creating extra supervisory responsibilities for teachers. Rolf's role, as he saw it, was to smooth out differences between teachers and parents, so he toned down a letter that the staff wanted to send to parents regarding the matter (TI, 10/29/82, p. 8). In general, Rolf worked to make the teachers feel secure, and he passed on to them any positive comments from the parents. With the parents, he tried to build confidence in the school so they would not be suspicious of the teachers (TI, 10/29/82, p. 9).

Because of the many pressures put on them by the community, Larkspur's staff needed the support of their principal. Rolf provided them this support, and teachers, in turn, perceived him as a protector (FN, 11/12/82, p. 2; FN, 2/24/83, p. 5; TI, 4/6/83, p. 7; TI, 4/29/83, p. 3). One teacher said that if it had not been for Rolf's assistance she would have left the school some time ago (TI, 5/6/83, p. 4). Another teacher said that Rolf made her job "worth it" and that he was the best "boss" she had ever had (FN, 11/18/82, p. 15).

Rolf used several methods to indicate that he appreciated the work his teachers did and that he understood the problems they encountered in working at the school. In his office one morning, he showed slides of classes taken during a school assembly. He made sure that each teacher who came to the office saw his or her class's slides. He also congratulated teachers on their students' performance during a reading marathon (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 1-2). Prior to Thanksgiving vacation, when the PTA presented a movie to the student body, Rolf offered to monitor the auditorium by himself, freeing his staff from this responsibility (FN, 11/12/82, p. 4).

Rolf occasionally praised teachers and their students (FN, 11/11/82, p. 8) and often interacted in a friendly way with his staff. Every morning, he greeted the teachers as they came into the office (FN, 11/4/82, p. 1; FN, 11/11/82, pp. 1-2; FN, 11/12/82, p. 1; FN, 12/2/82, p. 1; FN, 12/13/82, p. 1; FN, 4/29/83, p. 1). He chatted with them about personal matters (FN, 12/2/82, p. 1; FN, 12/3/82, p. 2), and usually he had a good word for them. When a teacher who had been sick returned to school, he told her that the teachers would be very glad to see her (FN,

11/11/82, p. 7). Rolf was open to, and flexible about, teachers' personal requests, such as leaving school early when the need arose (FN, 12/2/82, p. 1).

And though not all requests pleased Rolf, his actions were aimed at maintaining peace and harmony between himself and the staff. As seen earlier, he had paid the school custodian, using school funds, to clean the desk tops in one first-grade classroom. This was an exceptional gesture since other teachers cleaned the desks themselves (FN, 11/12/82, p. 1).

Rolf tried to build a harmonious relationship with his staff by having the teachers share decision-making responsibility and, sometimes, by keeping to himself any perceptions of teachers that might not be flattering to them (FN, 1/27/83, p. 2). Yet, on various occasions, he demonstrated independence and firmness. For example, when a teacher who had referred a misbehaving child to Rolf said that she expected Rolf to call the child's parents, Rolf reminded her that when she asked him to get involved, she gave the problem to him to deal with as he saw fit (FN, 1/27/83, p. 2). Rolf also did not hesitate to order remediation for teachers who were evaluated as being weak in various skills. At the end of the year of our study, Rolf told two teachers that they would have to undergo remediation or resign. One chose to resign (FN, 4/29/83, p. 7).

Students at Larkspur liked Principal Rolf, and he enjoyed interacting with them. The students often approached the principal for small matters, or they asked him to watch them as they were playing (FN, 11/4/82, p. 14; FN, 11/11/82, p. 11). Sometimes they showed him what they were doing in their classrooms (FN, 11/12/82, p. 8). Rolf took responsibility for playground duty and this gave him an opportunity to play with the kids and get to know them (FN, 11/4/82, p. 26). He was familiar with students and their stories and backgrounds (FN, 2/24/83, p. 4). The students, in turn, knew of Rolf's special interest in railroads, and they often approached him to ask questions on the topic (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 14, 15). When not dealing with a discipline problem, the principal interacted with the kids with friendliness and humor (FN, 11/4/82, p. 3). While on patrol in the cafeteria during lunch, he told jokes (FN, 11/4/82, p. 20). Occasionally, he teased the children (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 5, 6). Rolf sometimes filled in for the school's nurse and took care of students' injuries (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 5, 15, 26). This added a caring quality to his interactions with the youngsters.

The teachers at Larkspur School seemed to appreciate their students' work and behavior. One teacher said about her class: "The class is a terrific class. They are wonderful" (FN, 4/7/83, p. 1). Teachers often complimented students in class, telling them how well they were doing on a particular task (FN, 4/7/83, pp. 1, 6), praising an answer (FN, 4/7/83, p. 3; TI, 4/28/83, p. 1), encouraging other students to clap for a student who did exceptionally well (FN, 4/26/83, pp. 1-3), or thanking the students for waiting patiently (FN, 4/26/83, p. 6). Teachers

also gave students rewards for good work (TI, 5/5/83, p. 1). Occasionally some teachers expressed warmth by hugging students (FN, 4/7/83, pp. 5, 6; FN, 4/19/83, p. 5).

They also treated students in ways that communicated respect and concern. For example, in one classroom the students could leave the room to go to music class, get a drink, or use the bathroom without asking the teacher for permission (FN, 4/12/83, p. 7). In another classroom, the teacher prepared "fun" activities for children who had finished their academic tasks or who were becoming frustrated with a particular assignment (FN, 4/19/83, p. 8).

Nonetheless, despite the generally positive relationships among students and staff members, academic pressures sometimes caused problems. Students were often swayed by their parents' opinions of the teachers at Larkspur. One teacher reported that a student told him that "my mom says that you are a crackpot." The teacher commented cynically that the parents then wondered why he had trouble controlling the class (SO, 4/14/83, p. 9).

Summary: On the whole, agreement about the primary purpose of schooling lent a cohesiveness to the interrelations of the various segments of the Larkspur community. Teachers, parents, students, and the principal all worked toward academic success. This same orientation toward success, however, also generated problems. The community expected a great deal from the school, and when these expectations were not fulfilled, parents were vocal in expressing their disappointment. Teachers felt the pressure acutely and responded with suspicion toward parent demands. Principal Rolf, aware of the feelings on both sides of the issue, worked to mediate and solve problems between staff and parents. He recognized the importance of community support in his school setting and worked to maintain it while attending to the needs of his faculty.

Larkspur's Instructional Organization

Instructional organization is our collective term for the technical features of instructional coordination and delivery to which the principals in our study attended. For example, when acting to improve their instructional organizations, our principals manipulated class size and composition, scheduling, staff assignments, the scope and sequence of curriculum, the distribution of instructional materials, and even teaching styles. We suggest that instructional climate--the concept we discussed in the immediately preceding section--influences students' and staff members' feelings and expections about their schools, and that instructional organization delivers the reality.

In this section, we describe in greater detail the instructional system of Larkspur Elementary School, highlighting the content of instruction, class structures and teacher and student placement, pedagogy, and staff development. As in the

previous section on the instructional climate, our purpose is to discuss the beliefs and activities of the principal that influence these important factors of schooling. While reading this section, it is important to recall that the principal's and staff's goals for Larkspur included pushing students to achieve academically, building school and student pride, and improving students' self-concepts.

The Content of Instruction: Curriculum, subject matter, classes, topics, texts, program, schedule, and syllabus are a confusing array of terms often used by teachers and principals to describe what is taught in their classrooms or schools. Although these terms are somewhat analogous, they are not synonymous in that they tend to blur substance, method, and organization. In this section we wish to discuss the content of instruction at Larkspur and examine how that content was organized and determined. In so doing, we treat curriculum in the manner of Dunkin and Biddle (1974) who used that term as a broad concept for thinking about specific subject areas. But it was, perhaps, Dewey (1916) who best defined the content of instruction and underscored its importance in his discussion of "subject matter":

> It consists of the facts observed, recalled, read, and talked about, and the ideas suggested, in course of a development of a situation having a purpose. . . . What is the significance . . . ?
>
> In the last analysis, all that the educator can do is modify stimuli so that response will as surely as is possible result in the formation of desirable intellectual and emotional dispositions. Obviously . . . the subject matter . . . [has] intimately to do with this business of supplying an environment. (pp. 180-181)

The district office played a significant role in deciding what should and should not be taught at Larkspur School. As mentioned in the section on academic goals, the district's grade-level expectations specified the minimal expectations for academic success. The district also determined the series of textbooks from which schools could select those they wished to use. Finally, the district coordinated the annual testing to determine whether grade-level expectations were being met.

In point of fact, however, parents' expectations for their children greatly influenced the amount of material that teachers covered in their classes at Larkspur. As we shall see below, many teachers pushed their students through the required skills at a rapid pace in order to have their children performing above grade-level norms.

Pressure from the community seemed to have set a norm for high achievement at Larkspur. Parents expected their students to

succeed, and students were well aware that they were seen to be in competition with one another. For example, in one class a student held up his hand and when called upon said, "The other class is 30 pages ahead of us" (FN, 3/15/83, p. 4). The teacher responded that she didn't "think so," but that if they were, the number of pages covered was not as important as learning the material well (FN, 3/15/83, p. 4).

In this atmosphere, a teacher's success in teaching the required skills could greatly determine how long that teacher would remain at the school (FN, 3/4/83, p. 3). One teacher commented:

> The community does have a lot to say about it [student progress]. They're very strong. . . . I know I have to get so far. And I also know that if I don't have good test marks, I've got to answer. (TI, 2/5/83, p. 12)

In response to this pressure, many teachers structured their curriculum around the district tests. One gave her students enrichment worksheets as part of the math program and another gave students practice tests to prepare them for the regular routine of tests in April (FN, 4/6/83, p. 2; FN, 4/14/83, p. 6).

More significantly, a great many of Larkspur's teachers routinely completed their grade-level work long before the school year was over. One teacher said that her class had met the district's first-grade requirements before Christmas (SFI, 4/8/83, p. 4). A third-grade teacher told a similar story:

> Actually, we are through with the third-grade books for math, English, and reading. I really push my kids because I want them to score high on the tests. I don't know why they have the tests in April, because all the teachers push to get over the material before the tests. (FN, 4/14/83, p. 6)

After her class had completed the required texts, this teacher used her own supplementary materials for teaching. Some teachers filled out the remainder of their curriculum by moving on to lessons from the next grade level. But this practice tended to create minor problems in coordinating curriculum across grade levels and caused many teachers to resent those who used materials from the next grade (TI, 4/29/83, p. 3).

Many staff members, like the third-grade teacher mentioned above, avoided this problem by coming up with their own supplementary materials in both math and language arts. For example, the kindergarten teacher said:

> I usually make my own materials. The kindergarten part of Ginn [the reading series]

> is just too simple. I go way beyond what they give us for kindergarten. (TI, 4/26/83, p. 6)

Similarly, two first-grade teachers had compiled a library of supplementary materials which they had bought for their class because they felt the Ginn reading series was too boring (TI, 4/19/83, p. 7). For language arts lessons, a fifth-grade teacher had borrowed an older text from a colleague because "the language book we have is so terrible" (TI, 4/6/83, p. 4), and another fifth-grade teacher, who also found the assigned language text unacceptable, said:

> All three of us [fifth-grade teachers] use our own materials because the book is so bad. . . . The grammar is poor--and only two pages on nouns--and it doesn't cover prepositional phrases. I pull from other resources: my own materials and the materials of the other fifth-grade teachers. We get a new book next year and it is much better. We selected it through the school textbooks committee. (TI, 4/7/83, p. 3)

Although the textbook selection committee was an avenue through which teachers could influence the content of instruction, the staff did not readily avail itself of this opportunity. For example, during the year when volunteers were needed to review the district's language arts selections, Rolf had trouble finding enough interested parties. In the September 16, 1982 "Daily Bulletin," he asked, "[Does] anyone feel interested in volunteering for a Language Arts book selection committee? Please let me know if you're interested" (Doc., 9/16/82, n.p.). Only two teachers volunteered, so Rolf placed an appeal in the October 6 "Bulletin." When this did not elicit any response, he placed a desperate plea in the October 11 "Bulletin": "Won't someone help out evaluating these spellers? HELP!" (Doc., 10/11/82, n.p.). Still unsuccessful, Rolf put another item in the October 18 issue, with similar result.

Despite this seeming indifference, teachers had definite opinions about the texts they used. One teacher praised the reading series because "it's very appropriate for this school, as it's a harder series than some and more challenging to this group of kids" (TI, 5/13/83, p. 5). Another staff member felt the math text was effective because it had a lot of "drills" (TI, 5/7/83, p. 5). Yet, their unwillingness to serve on the selection committee sometimes came back to haunt Larkspur's teachers, forcing them to find their own substitute or supplementary materials. And during a faculty meeting when the two teachers who had volunteered for the committee presented the spelling books they had selected, another teacher complained vociferously because the books emphasized memorization rather than understanding (SO, 1/10/83, p. 1).

The principal's direct involvement in coordinating Larkspur's curriculum was minimal. Rolf helped to set the conditions for instruction, and he attempted to provide the equipment and supplies that would make his teachers' efforts successful. He did not, however, intercede directly in determining academic content or establishing instructional techniques. As demonstrated above, he took a leading role in soliciting volunteers for the textbook selection committee. Once the books had been selected, Rolf scheduled the presentation by the committee members for the entire faculty. The principal also set up mini-classes as part of an "enrichment curriculum" (FN, 12/3/82, pp. 7, 8; FN, 1/10/82, p. 2; FN, 1/11/82, p. 2). And he discussed with the "Horizon" teacher various ways to expand the accelerated program (FN, 11/12/82, p. 6; FN, 12/3/82, p. 6).

Rolf also made sure that teachers received the instructional and evaluation materials that they needed. He distributed the student progress forms for arithmetic and social studies (Doc., 3/3/83, n.p.; Doc., 4/20/83, n.p.). And if a teacher needed supplementary materials, Rolf came to his or her aid. According to the kindergarten teacher:

> The principal will get me any supplemental materials I want, but I've surveyed them all, and they are just too simple. So I use the old Sullivan series. The district threw that series out a few years ago and Mr. Rolf got me all the throw-outs when I asked him to. (TI, 4/26/83, p. 6)

On those occasions when Rolf did visit classrooms, it was usually to fill in for a missing teacher (FN, 12/13/82, p. 1; FN, 4/29/83, p. 2), to help a substitute teacher to get set up (FN, 11/11/82, p. 1), or to evaluate a teacher who had been the object of some community complaints (FN, 11/4/82, p. 17). Rolf did not check students' work. Even when he filled in for teachers he usually told a story (FN, 12/13/82, p. 1), played a game, or talked with students about nonacademic matters like art and baseball (FN, 4/29/83, p. 2).

It should be remembered that Rolf had majored in elementary administration because he found elementary curriculum boring. Consequently, he chose not to interfere with teaching methods and techniques. He said:

> I haven't really done much curriculum. I guess my role is supporting what the teachers do with curriculum, or supporting the curriculum by providing materials, pencils, and papers, and giving the teachers time to teach with as little interruption as possible. It's amazing how little we really have to do with curriculum. It's very indirect for the principal. It rests with teacher. (I, 11/4/82, p. 26)

And the teachers, in response to both district requirements and community pressures, geared their classroom instruction toward high academic achievement.

Structures and Placement: In the previous section, we described what was taught at Larkspur School and why it is taught. "Structures and Placement" explains how students and teachers were dispersed in order to deliver or receive that content. By structures, we mean the classifications of social groups in schools: for example, grade levels or grade-level clusters, classes or classrooms, or skill-level groups.

Sometimes the definitions of such groups are largely dependent upon the physical spaces prescribed within the limits of a building's architecture. In that case, the composition of groups may be determined by how many youngsters fit into a space and by how many such spaces are available in a school. In other situations groups may be more fluid, as when children move individually from classroom to classroom during a school day based on criteria such as achievement levels in various subjects (see "Pedagogy" for our discussion of within-classroom grouping).

In either case, a social context for learning is created. Cohorts of students are defined and maintained, sometimes with remarkable longevity, which can have varying impact on any member of the cohort. Students' progress can be impeded or accelerated; students may become stereotyped as "bright" or "slow" and inflexibly assigned accordingly; and teachers may develop expectations for students' capacities for learning that influence the nature of their instruction (see Brophy, 1973; Brophy & Good, 1974).

Teaching assignments are also an important element of school structure. Such assignments may be based on teachers' previous experiences, expertise, or preferences, or on administrative concerns regarding staff development, staff cohesiveness, or teachers' personalities and/or teaching styles. Bringing together specific teachers with individual students or student groups helps define the social context of instruction and influences the academic experience of children. (See Barnett & Filby, 1984; Filby & Barnett, 1982; and Filby, Barnett, & Bossert, 1982 for descriptions of how the social context of instruction influences students' perceptions and the rate at which materials are presented to students.)

The overall point is that one of the most familiar aspects of schools--classrooms containing a teacher and a group of students--is a critical factor in successful instruction. As such, the assignment of students and teachers to classrooms or their more fluid counterparts should be a primary concern of principals (Bossert et al., 1982). This section describes the role of Larkspur's principal in these decisions.

In general, Principal Rolf had little to do with determining the school-level class structure at Larkspur. The school's

teachers were allowed to use whatever arrangements they found effective. Larkspur's K-3 grades were divided into self-contained classrooms. Teachers in grades 4-6 used some cross-classroom ability grouping in math and reading (IOI, 5/12/83, Part I). Students needing special assistance in these subjects were sent on a pullout basis to a resource class called "Re-ed," which had two full-time teachers (TI, 3/3/83, p. 5; IOI, 5/12/83, Part I). Teachers usually attempted to schedule students for resource help during times when no important instruction was taking place in the regular classroom.

Another pullout program at the school was the "Horizon" program for gifted students. Like the resource program, this program had explicit guidelines concerning appropriate referral and acceptance criteria. In order to enter the Horizon program, students must have received a recommendation from their classroom teacher and have scored 90% or higher on a reading and vocabulary test (FN, 11/11/82, p. 8). During the fall semester, the Horizon teacher visited Larkspur three days a week, but after Christmas, she was available only two days a week. At one point, Rolf and the teacher discussed what it would take to get a full-time gifted program at Larkspur (FN, 11/12/82, p. 6; FN, 12/3/82, p. 6). Judging from the pressure parents exerted on the principal to enroll their children in the program (FN, 11/12/83, pp. 6, 7), the competition for the 35 spaces open to fourth, fifth, and sixth graders was fierce.

Students at Larkspur were assigned to homeroom classes by lottery. Initially, the names were placed in a hat and drawn by the teachers (IOI, 5/12/83, Part II). But because the principal desired groups that were as heterogeneous as possible, adjustments were made following the lottery (IOI, 5/12/83, Part II). These adjustments attempted to ensure that each class had a mixture of students from different achievement levels, a mixture of well-behaved and "problem" students, a balance of students from each sex, and a group of students who could get along with each other. Other factors in making student assignments were parent preferences, the compatibility of teaching and learning styles, and teacher recommendations (IOI, 5/12/83, Part II).

Each May, in the "Daily Bulletin," Rolf asked teachers for input regarding student placement for the following year (Doc., 5/6/83, n.p.). These recommendations were then considered after the lottery. Parents were also allowed to submit requests for their children's placement. They could make a request by writing a letter or by asking for an interview with the principal (SO, 4/29/83, p. 7). During the spring of 1983, Rolf had 56 interviews with parents regarding classroom placement. Many of these parents had come to school to observe teachers before deciding whom to request for their child (FN, 11/12/82, p. 1). In one case, Rolf immediately honored the request, after checking and discovering that a particular child was indeed qualified for the accelerated program (FN, 11/12/82, p. 7). Usually, though, a placement committee composed of two teachers and two parents handled parent requests. The committee's function was to

determine whether a strong academic or social reason existed for a particular assignment (FN, 4/29/83, p. 1; IOI, 5/12/83, Part II).

Larkspur had a reputation among other schools as having the toughest standards in the district for student evaluation and promotion (SO, 2/25/83, p. 1). Accompanying the school's high standards was a strong competitive spirit among the students. As one teacher put it:

> The kids in this school are really competitive. They really are. Really their parents are. Their parents push them. This is a competitive school and they like to be ahead. They like to be recognized, and grades are important. (FN, 3/15/83, p. 5)

Larkspur's teachers often fed their students' competitive tendencies by comparing students to one another. One teacher made a point of announcing who had gotten the highest scores on tests, although on one day she mistakenly announced the wrong person three consecutive times (FN, 4/12/83, p. 4). Another teacher encouraged her students while they were working by commenting, "I wonder which paper will be the best one" (FN, 4/26/83, p. 2). Not all teachers, however, engaged in student comparisons. A second-grade teacher believed that comparisons made the children anxious and were unnecessary because children worked harder on their own (TI, 2/25/83, p. 13).

Formal standards for student promotion and for evaluation of student progress in basic skills at Larkspur were set by the district. In basic skills testing, the percentages for grading were as follows for district tests: 90% and above = A; 80% - 90% = B; 70% - 80% = C; below 70% = D; and NI (Needs Improvement). Report cards were issued four times a year for grades 1-6. Within these general guidelines, however, teachers did exercise some discretion. Some lower-grade teachers graded on a class-average or curve basis. A few upper-level teachers varied the percentage grading system depending upon the subject being covered (FN, 3/7/83, p. 9).

By and large, however, the use of alternative grading standards was more prevalent in the lower rather than the upper grades. For example, the kindergarten teacher issued report cards three times a year and used only three grade categories: C for commendable or excellent; S for satisfactory; and NI for Needs Improvement (SFI, 3/29/83, p. 5). A second-grade teacher reported that an A meant that a student was doing grade-level work in basic skills; a grade of B meant that she as a teacher helped the student sometimes, but that the student was generally capable of handling the work; a grade of C was given to those students whom she helped with their work on a regular basis or those who daydreamed during class or had short attention spans; a grade of D was given to those students who were behind in their work in the basic skills and who needed re-education help from

resource persons. This teacher did not give F grades at all (SFI, 2/25/83, p. 5).

A first-grade teacher reported that an A represented excellent work, a B indicated satisfactory work, and a C meant that a student needed improvement (SFI, 4/8/83, p. 5). Another first-grade teacher said that she was very much against report cards, especially for the younger children. She believed that the children did not care what grades they received but that the parents were the ones who "make such a fuss" (TI, 4/29/83, p. 2). She gave letter grades at the end of the year based on the class average or on a bell curve. She disliked giving grades at all but saw the curves as better than grading on a straight percentage basis, in part because "in the first grade it's hard to do" the latter (TI, 4/29/83, p. 2).

Of the upper-grade staff members, one fifth-grade teacher reported that the letter grading system in her class was variable. Her considerations were more complex and context-bound than those of teachers who graded strictly according to student test performance. She adjusted grades by taking into account the time and conditions under which a test was taken, the speed and capabilities of each individual student, and the number of problems worked and corrected in the exam (SFI, 4/14/83, p. 5).

Despite the school's exacting standards, it seemed that few students really failed at Larkspur. Not many teachers at the school had ever retained any of their students (SFI, 4/29/83, p. 5). One first-grade teacher explained that if a child had been working very hard but was still below grade level (usually a resource child), she would exempt him or her from achievement grades by giving an NI. She also graded for effort and progress and said that she could almost always change an NI into a C grade if the student tried hard enough (TI, 4/29/83, p. 2).

One factor limiting retentions was the lengthy process of evaluating students who were under consideration for retention. Once a recommendation to hold a student back had been made, the student's teacher, his or her parents, the principal, and a resource person had to discuss the advisability of such an action. Usually, their decision took into account the student's achievement level, attitude, physical size, and social and personal maturity (SFI, 4/7/83, p. 5). After these factors had been considered, an action was suggested. Parents could prevent a retention by signing a waiver that enabled their child to pass from one grade to another without having completed the expected requirements. In any case, parents had ultimate say in whether or not their child would be retained (IOI, 5/12/83, Part II).

Even when parents were agreeable to a retention, teachers were somewhat reluctant to recommend one. As one teacher put it, once a child had been held back, a "stigma" was then attached to that student for the rest of his or her career at Larkspur. This teacher also believed that retention should be made only at the

kindergarten and first-grade levels, because by then the capabilities of the student had been determined (SFI, 4/6/83, p. 5).

To avoid the problems associated with retention, the school employed a number of measures to prevent students from falling too far behind. For example, one of the second-grade teachers used a system of sending notes to parents indicating whether the child was falling behind or having trouble in any areas of his or her homework. On a routine basis, she sent notes to parents of all her students each Friday when the students took home a folder containing the work that they had done during that week. If a child fell behind, the teacher sent a note each day, indicating the work that needed to be finished. As the student caught up, the notes decreased to every other day, then to twice a week, then to the routine Friday notices (SO, 2/25/83, p. 1).

Another teacher allowed students who had scored low on tests to retake the tests in order to raise their grades. She also gave them special help or assigned them to peer tutors. Through these means she kept her students at about the same achievement level (TI, 2/25/83, p. 1).

Student scores on district tests were used diagnostically to indicate where a student needed help. As soon as scores from the spring tests became available, teachers sat down with students and their parents to look over the results. Together, they discussed a student's performance and suggested ways to improve achievement. Report cards were also used in a similar fashion. Following the first reporting period, the fifth-grade teachers met individually with all the students and parents in their classes. The second time grades were issued, the teachers met as a group with the parents of children about whom they were concerned. The children were also included in this meeting. At the third reporting period, teachers met with those students in danger of being retained along with the parents of the students (SO, 4/27/83, p. 2).

Unless a student had been doing very poorly or had been recommended for retention, Rolf's role in student evaluation was usually informal. One of the fifth-grade teachers believed that Rolf kept track of the general level of achievement at the school by carefully reviewing the districtwide tests given in April. She did not believe, however, that the principal knew the levels of achievement of individual students unless a parent had shown particular concern about a child's grades, or unless that child was a resource student in need of extra help. This belief was held by many of her peers (TI, 4/6/83, p. 8; TI, 4/27/83, p. 6; TI, 5/5/83, p. 5). But another teacher commented that Rolf was kept regularly informed about student performance by the children themselves. Students readily talked to the principal while he was monitoring the play areas (TI, 2/25/83, p. 13). Teachers likewise felt free to talk to Rolf about their students (TI, 4/28/83, p. 7).

Because teachers' predictions about their students' achievement scores or levels of competence were often very accurate, Rolf respected the judgments of his staff. However, he did insist that all teachers maintain academic records (TI, 2/25/83, p. 13; TI, 3/24/83, p. 7; TI, 4/8/83, p. 9) for use during parent conferences. When he received an inquiry or comment from a parent about an incident in a classroom, Rolf immediately checked with the teacher involved (FN, 12/3/82, p. 11). As one teacher explained:

> Mr. Rolf, real early in the morning, came in and said, "Well, I'm meeting with Joe's parents, and I don't know what they want. But tell me about this boy." So I got my folders--I keep folders on all the children--and I got it out and I went through everything, the writing, the reading, the language, and so when he was through he knew just about academically and socially where this little boy was. And he is one that expects that if he comes in and asks a teacher about a student, you can tell him what the reading level is, where they compare with the rest of the group socially. (TI, 4/8/83, p. 9)

But except for cases similar to that above, Rolf usually stayed clear of matters involving student evaluation.

Some of Larkspur's staff members sought to involve both parents and students in the evaluation process. For example, one teacher supplemented her evaluation and grading procedures by inviting parents to observe children in class. She then talked to them about their child and the problems he/she might be having. She indicated that this method was not necessarily the most effective because

> the mothers never see [that] their child looks different than the other children. They are blind to their [children's] faults. (SO, 3/29/83, p. 2)

This teacher reported that grandmothers and fathers could see what the problems were but never the mothers, so she tried to have the mothers bring someone with them (SO, 3/29/83, p. 2).

In order to facilitate student involvement in the evaluation process, the kindergarten teacher kept a large chart on the board displaying the name of each child. Beside each name was a series of pictures indicating to the children what the activities of the day were. As they completed the various items, the children drew lines through the appropriate pictures with magic markers to show that they had finished. They then went on to the next item. At the end of the session (usually about every two weeks), the chart was erased and replaced with another schedule. In this way, the

children independently monitored their own progress (FN, 4/26/83, p. 6). Similarly, another teacher placed a chart in her room for math class which specified the steps that had to be completed before a student could pass to the next grade (FN, 3/3/83, p. 4). A teacher in a fifth-grade class allowed her students to correct their own work (FN, 4/7/83, p. 1).

In summary, Rolf's involvement in student placement and evaluation at Larkspur was minimal. Parent requests for special placement for their children were initiated through the principal, but final decisions usually rested with a committee. The principal's input was also required when retention of a student was being considered, but the ultimate responsibility for student retentions fell upon the parents. In general, the structures determining evaluation and placement operated with little intervention by Jonathan Rolf.

Pedagogy: Lortie (1975) wrote about the ideals of teachers:

> Teachers favor outcomes for students which are not arcane. Their purposes, in fact, seem to be relatively traditional; they want to produce "good" people--students who like learning--and they hope they will attain such goals with all their students. . . .
>
> We find that the goals sought by teachers cannot be routinely realized. Their ideals are difficult and demanding: exerting moral influence, "soldering" students to learning, and achieving general impact presume great capacity to penetrate and alter the consciousness of students. (pp. 132-133)

In his words, we glimpse the essence of teaching, the ideals to which men and women of that profession largely aspire. Lortie's statement also confronts us with the fact that teachers' goals for students are difficult to achieve. In this light, those things which teachers <u>do</u> in their classrooms, the activities or tasks they lead and in which they involve students become critically important.

The variety of strategies and materials used by teachers is remarkably small given the diversity of students and contexts in which they work. Further, we can ascertain from historical chronicles and archival representations that the delivery of instruction has changed little over the centuries. Despite the aspirations of philosophers, psychologists, sociologists, and radical educators (Mayhew & Edwards, 1936; Neill, 1960; Skinner, 1948; Smith & Keith, 1971) and the advent of a variety of audiovisual technologies, instruction remains predominately whole-group and teacher-directed.

The range of pedagogic diversity that does commonly occur in schools was captured by Bossert (1979) in only three categories:

> Recitation--An activity that involves the whole class or a large group of children in a single task: The children listen to the question the teacher asks, raise their hands, wait to be recognized, and give an answer . . . the teacher usually controls the flow of questions and answers.
>
> Class Task--Worksheets, tests, math assignments, or other tasks assigned to the entire class.
>
> Multitask--Usually includes tasks like independent reading, small group and independent projects, artwork, and crafts. These activities involve the greatest amount of pupil choice in organizing and completing the work. (pp. 44-45)

The choice of instructional strategy seems to depend on many factors. Attempting to model classroom teaching, Dunkin and Biddle (1974) noted that the instructional approach selected by teachers is influenced by their formative and training experiences and by their own psychological "properties" (p. 40). In addition, as in our own conception (see Figure 1, p. v), they noted the importance of context variables such as community, school size, student ethnic composition, etc. on classroom practice. (For further examples, see Dwyer, Smith, Prunty & Kleine, in press, for a case study of contextual impact on an educational innovation.) Finally, Dunkin and Biddle underscored the importance of the students--important partners in any instructional task:

> Most systems for studying teaching have concentrated on teacher behavior, assuming, reasonably, that much of the success of teaching is in the teacher's hands. . . . Are these presumptions adequate? Surely teachers not only induce but also react to pupil behavior. . . . In some ways, therefore, teacher behavior is also a function of pupil behavior, and the success of the teaching enterprise rests with pupils as well as with teachers. (p. 44)

The purpose of our study, of course, is to look beyond the teacher and his or her students and to examine the role of the principal in the leadership and management of instruction. This section typifies the pedagogy employed at Larkspur Elementary School and seeks to explain the instructional patterns that we found by relating these patterns to students, teachers, the principal, and other contextual factors.

In general, teachers at Larkspur employed traditional teaching techniques in their classrooms (FN, 4/6/83, p. 1; FN,

4/13/83, p. 1). Students usually received a lecture from the teacher, who used the board to outline points and draw helpful diagrams (FN, 3/7/83, p. 2; TI, 4/14/83, p. 2). In some cases students were asked to copy from the board (FN, 3/15/83, p. 2) or, in a language arts class, to copy and underline phrases (FN, 4/6/83, p. 1).

Teachers often went over a few problems orally to practice and discuss the concepts (TI, 2/25/83, p. 1), then the class worked from their texts (FN, 3/7/83, p. 1; FN, 4/7/83, p. 1). During oral work, the teacher usually encouraged students through verbal feedback (FN, 3/15/83, p. 7). And while students worked silently, many teachers walked around the classroom surveying the students' work, making comments, and giving assistance to individual students (FN, 3/7/83, p. 6; FN, 4/7/83, p. 7; TI, 4/14/83, p. 2; FN, 4/26/83, p. 2).

Despite the preponderance of traditional instructional strategies, a few teachers were notably innovative in their approaches to instruction. One of these more progressive staff members said:

> The class is different depending on what it is that I'm doing. . . . The way the class is depends on the concept that I'm teaching. (TI, 4/7/83, p. 1)

The most noticeable departure from the traditional instructional norm, however, was the teaching of the two resource teachers. Their class was "a combination of re-ed [remedial education] and moral ed" (TI, 3/3/83, p. 1). The teaching techniques of this pair stressed individual progress. The teachers contracted with each student "at the beginning of each teaching section to determine what goals are best for each kid" (TI, 3/3/83, p. 3). Therefore each student had his or her own set of tasks to do (TI, 3/3/83, p. 3). A flow chart hanging on one wall of the classroom specified the necessary steps for math (FN, 3/3/83, p. 5). These teachers sometimes referred students to this chart and discussed it with them in order to help the students determine where they were and what the next task was (FN, 3/3/83, p. 4).

While instructing, these teachers alternated tasks: One directed and timed activities while the other reinforced and guided student work (TI, 3/3/83, pp. 2, 4). The teachers gave stickers to students who had done well during the period. At least one other teacher, the kindergarten teacher, had her students work individually and gave feedback and help in a similar way (FN, 4/26/83, p. 1).

Most other variations from traditional teaching norms were observed during review sessions. Techniques used by teachers included playing team games (FN, 4/14/83, p. 3) and having students exchange and correct each others' papers (FN, 4/12/83, p. 1).

It should be pointed out, however, that reading classes throughout the school were structured differently from other subjects (FN, 4/13/83, p. 4; FN, 4/19/83, p. 1). (Small-group instruction was used widely in the teaching of reading and will be described in greater detail below.) A second-grade reading teacher described how her class proceeded:

> I do this type of program every day. I get the class set up on their seatwork, then I call the reading groups one by one and listen to them read for me. (TI, 5/13/83, p. 3)

In each reading group, she asked many questions and responded to students' queries by asking them more questions (SO, 5/13/83, p. 5). A first-grade teacher set up her reading class similarly. She introduced a topic and gave directions to the class to work on an assignment--a different task on the same topic for each group. Directions were written on the board. Then the teacher worked with the various groups. Reading group activities in other classes included individual oral reading, choral reading, repetition, comprehension questions, word games, word drills, and reinforcement of other reading skills (FN, 4/19/83, p. 4; FN, 4/19/83, pp. 3, 5).

Homework policies at Larkspur varied from teacher to teacher. Some saw homework as a way to extend in-class assignments or to prepare for tests. For example, before a spelling test, a first-grade teacher told her students to "go home and study the words you need to study" (TI, 4/8/83, p. 4). And one of the reading teachers often had students finish class assignments for homework (FN, 4/12/83, p. 7). This teacher also prescribed a certain number of pages for students to read outside of class each week. If the students met the weekly requirement for extra reading, she awarded them points which could lead to a class party. She viewed the party as an incentive for the middle reading group members whom she felt were lacking in motivation.

Other teachers simply used homework to help students catch up on missed assignments. A fifth-grade language arts teacher required that students make up any missed work "unless they [had been] really sick" (FN, 4/6/83, p. 6).

There was no indication that the principal was involved in policies regarding homework. He did, however, regard it as important, and in one instance, he arranged to deliver to a teacher an assignment which an autistic child had forgotten (FN, 11/4/82, pp. 8, 10, 12). It may be significant that a teacher who expressed a somewhat relaxed approach toward homework--"I don't think that [a child] should have to do a bunch of homework if he understands what he's doing" (TI, 4/14/83, p. 2)--was also one of the two teachers placed on remediation (SO, 4/14/83, p. 1).

As indicated earlier, most within-class grouping at Larkspur involved reading instruction. In many cases, groups were

determined by tests given at the beginning of the year. As they progressed or lost skills, students moved from one group to another (FN, 4/12/83, p. 4). Based on test scores, the kindergarten teacher divided her children into three groups--slow, medium, and fast--for reading instruction. When they met in groups, the kindergartners often sat in a circle on the floor (FN, 4/26/83, p. 1). Otherwise, students sat in assigned seats which could be changed if children became too disruptive during instruction (FN, 4/26/83, p. 3).

All but one of the first-grade teachers gave the Ginn Reading Placement Test in order to group their students. One separated her children into four groups, depending upon ability (FN, 4/19/83, p. 2). Another divided her children into six different groups (TI, 2/25/83, p. 1). And still another mixed students from various achievement levels in order to let the children "learn from each other" (FN, 4/19/83, p. 2). The other first-grade teacher did not test her students but began her class by assigning basic reading books and waited until later in the year to group students within the classroom (FN, 4/19/83, p. 6).

Grouping at other grade levels was somewhat similar to that in the first grade. One of the second-grade teachers gave a reading test and an oral test to her students to determine their classroom group (TI, 2/25/83, p. 12). A fifth-grade teacher let her students form their own reading groups because most of them were at about the same level of reading competence (FN, 4/13/83, p. 2). And because some of the upper grades used cross-classroom grouping, activities within these classrooms were usually more traditional, but on occasion were self-paced (FN, 3/3/83, p. 2; FN, 3/7/83, p. 7; FN, 4/7/83, p. 7).

Instruction in math at the school was the activity most often self-paced. A third-grade teacher, for example, gave all her students the same assignment but let them work individually on their problems. She offered expanded notations for her faster students but did not group them separately from the other kids in the class (FN, 3/15/83, p. 6). After assessing the results of the test scores at the beginning of the year, one fourth-grade teacher made a contract with each student in which the student agreed to achieve a particular goal by the end of the school year (FN, 3/3/83, p. 7). And one of the fifth-grade teachers believed that all math classes were better handled with individualized instruction (FN, 4/7/83, p. 7).

In summary, pedagogy at Larkspur was largely traditional, with some within-class grouping and self-paced instruction providing a degree of variety. Teachers, when grouping children, were free to set their own criteria, and as a result, the nature of these groups varied from classroom to classroom. Some were mixed according to ability, and others were divided by skill levels. Like grouping, homework practices varied from teacher to teacher. The principal's role in pedagogical practices at the school was minimal, reflecting perhaps Rolf's view that the

teachers were the experts and that his task was primarily to provide the appropriate support.

Staff Development: Nothing seemed as important to the dozens of principals with whom we spoke in this study than the quality of their teachers. Again and again, we were told that teachers make the difference in the quality of schools. The hiring and retention of teachers as well as the development of their instructional expertise, then, seems critical in the establishment of an effective instructional system in any school.

Illuminating the same point, Shulman (1984) focused on teachers in a statement about effective schools that he termed "outrageous":

> I would like to suggest another image for you to carry around in your heads of what an effective school is like--an image that goes beyond the empirical view of a school that produces gains in test scores . . . . I'd like to suggest a view of an effective school that you will treat as outrageous. I think we ought to define effective schools as those that are educative settings for teachers. (Address)

He justified his proposal as follows:

> If the quality of education for kids ultimately depends on how smart teachers are about their teaching and about their subjects, what better place for them to learn new things than in the school itself?

Noting our principals' beliefs about the importance of teachers and finding no argument with Shulman's logic, we consider the topic of staff development a crucial part of the technology of instructional systems (see also Showers, 1984).

In conceptualizing staff development as growth or as learning experiences for teachers, three common aspects of the day-to-day world of schools seem germane: a) the supervision of instruction; b) teacher evaluation; and c) in-service opportunities for staff. We have already woven the topic of supervision in this school into other portions of the story. For example, through supervision, we find our principal influencing social and academic goals, social and academic curriculum, and pedagogy. In this section, then, we would like to illuminate the principal's activities and attitudes regarding teacher evaluation and discuss his role in providing in-service activities for teachers.

Before describing <u>teacher evaluation</u> at Larkspur, we would like to clarify the difference between instructional supervision

and teacher evaluation, for the two are often confused. McLaughlin (1984) distinguished between the two:

> Supervision of teaching and evaluation of teaching are not the same thing. Instructional supervision is the process of facilitating the professional growth of a teacher by giving the teacher feedback about classroom interactions and helping the teacher to make use of that feedback to become a more effective teacher. Evaluation is the analysis of overall teaching performance to meet contractual requirements, including the measurement of teacher change and improvement both in teaching and professional conduct to make personnel decisions for job placement, tenure, performance improvement plans, dismissal, and recognition and promotion.
>
> The power to supervise is bestowed by teachers and is intended to create trust between the teacher and supervisor, to facilitate teacher learning and develop teacher autonomy. The power to evaluate is bestowed by the governing board, administration, and state regulations. (p. 4)

For the purpose of teacher evaluation, Larkspur's district had what was called an accountability program. This program established districtwide goals for principals and teachers. At the district level, the superintendent reviewed the performance of each principal. And at each school, the principal administered the program for the teachers. Consequently, Rolf met with each of his teachers three times during the year: at the beginning of the year to explain district expectations and set goals for the year, in the middle of the year to determine the teacher's progress, and at the end of the year to certify that goals had been met.

Following the year-end meetings with teachers, Rolf did not submit annual teacher performance evaluations to the district office, but he did send the superintendent a list certifying that Larkspur's teachers were providing satisfactory service. If a teacher was not performing well, Rolf placed that teacher on "remediation" (IOI, 5/12/83, Part II). Remediation was a two-step process. The first step, informal remediation, specified that the teacher work to improve particular aspects of his or her teaching. If the teacher did not improve, then formal remediation was begun, and a specific program of help over a prescribed period of time was set up. If the program was successful then the teacher continued at the school; if not, then the teacher was dismissed (IOI, 5/12/83, Part II).

At the end of the year of our study, two teachers were told to begin remediation or to leave the school. Interestingly, these teachers had been negatively criticized by parents in letters requesting classroom assignments for their children. In the letters, parents said that one teacher was not substantive enough in her lessons and that a second teacher was too bizarre (FN, 4/29/83, pp. 7-8). One of the teachers chose to leave. The second decided to remain (SO, 4/29/83, p. 4). In both instances, Rolf seemed greatly influenced by the views of the parents.

The case of a third teacher, however, provides an instructive contrast. This teacher was also criticized by parents in their letters. In explanation, Rolf said that she was "a little too artsy for some of these folks" (FN, 4/29/83, p. 7). Rolf, however, felt that she was a good teacher, and he simply "ignore[d] those statements" (FN, 4/29/83, p. 7). The principal's action in this third case indicates that he played the role of protector when he felt strongly about the teacher. Otherwise, as the other two cases suggest, he did not buck the opinion of the community.

Larkspur's teachers believed that when evaluating his staff, Rolf used information other than that gathered from parent letters and the meetings specified by the accountability program. A number of teachers said that the principal monitored students' progress and teachers' success at teaching basic skills by checking the results of the annual California Achievement Tests (TI, 4/6/83, p. 9; TI, 4/7/83, p. 6; TI, 4/14/83, p. 7; TI, 4/29/83, p. 4). A third-grade teacher who believed that Rolf went over the test scores also felt that Rolf's evaluations included a great deal of trust. She said:

> He would take our word that we are teaching the skills from those skill books. That's part of the accountability we have. (TI, 4/6/83, p. 9)

Some teachers thought that Rolf might have collected information for evaluation by observing classes (TI, 3/24/83, p. 6; TI, 4/6/83, p. 7). They said that when the principal visited classrooms on errands, he also got an idea of what was going on (TI, 4/7/83, p. 5; TI, 4/8/83, p. 8; TI, 4/29/83, p. 4; TI, 5/5/83, p. 4). On one occasion, Rolf did observe a teacher precisely because he was concerned about academics in the teacher's room (FN, 11/4/82, p. 17). By and large, however, Rolf's visits were informal and most teachers welcomed them. During Rolf's visits, the first-grade teacher apprised the principal of her class's progress because she felt that it would be hard for him to really keep up on everyone otherwise (TI, 4/8/83, p. 8). A couple of other teachers mentioned that when Rolf dropped in to visit their classrooms, he did not give them the impression that he was "snooping" or "spying" (TI, 4/6/83, p. 7; TI, 4/25/83, p. 5; TI, 4/28/83, p. 6).

Other possible sources of information for Rolf's evaluations were lesson plans, bulletin boards, and student records. All teachers composed general outlines of the week's lessons and some submitted them to the principal. One teacher believed that Rolf did take the time to read these plans (TI, 2/25/83, p. 8). But many did not bother to turn in their plans, and most of those who did believed that Rolf did not read them (TI, 4/6/83, p. 6; TI, 4/7/83, p. 5; TI, 4/8/83, p. 8). Another staff member said that the principal checked teachers' bulletin boards to get an indication of "what kind of teacher you [were]." She based this opinion on her own experience. Bulletin boards were one of the main items mentioned when evaluation forms were filled out for her three-year probation period (TI, 4/28/83, p. 6). Rolf also expected his teachers to be a complete source of information about their students, and sometimes, in the case of a parent interview that we mentioned earlier, he called on the teacher for a full report (TI, 4/8/83, p. 9).

As a whole, the Larkspur staff was not opinionated about Rolf's formal and informal evaluation procedures. A kindergarten teacher believed that Rolf was businesslike in his evaluations and that teachers weren't criticized unless it was necessary (TI, 4/24/83, p. 5). The teachers who did comment on the principal's evaluation procedures appeared to be satisfied with the fairness of his policies.

Although Rolf did not play a particularly active role in determining instructional technique at Larkspur, he did attempt to promote a positive <u>in-service</u> climate in the building. Little (1982) has commented on this important aspect of successful schools:

> In . . . successful schools, teachers and administrators [are] more likely to talk together regularly and frequently about the business of instruction . . . , more likely to work together to develop lessons, assignments and materials, and more likely to teach one another about new ideas or practices; this habit of shared work on teaching (a norm of collegiality) stands in contrast to the carefully preserved autonomy that prevail[s] in less successful schools. (p. 40)

Little's words emphasized the value of having school staff members share work on and about teaching under a "norm of collegiality." In this way, teachers learn from each other; ideas acquired through participation in in-service training activities are brought back to colleagues, shared in discussions, and processed for useful incorporation into classroom practice. Facilitating such exchanges of ideas for the improvement of instruction is a key role of the principal. The unique position of the principal in the school organization that permits him or her to facilitate and support the exchange of ideas for the

improvement of instruction is a persistent theme in the literature (e.g. Rosenblum & Jastrzab, n.d.; Showers, 1984).

Larkspur's teachers had the opportunity to improve their teaching skills by taking in-service classes at the district office. These classes were not mandatory because the district had recently dropped its requirement that teachers take classes in order to be recertified. Consequently, some teachers had ignored the option altogether. In the year of our study, however, there was "a new move by the district" to supply workshops on a variety of topics for teachers (SO, 4/6/83, p. 1). When teachers did attend workshops, they were paid to go, and afterwards, they reported back to the rest of the staff on what they had learned (TI, 2/25/83, p. 10).

Generally, teachers felt that the information presented in the classes given by the district was worthwhile (SO, 4/6/83, p. 1), but as one third-grade teacher put it, "None of the classes are especially outstanding" (TI, 4/6/83, p. 2). Teachers believed that course topics were chosen by the principal and administration after considering teacher preferences. Nonetheless, one first-grade teacher commented, "I've never seen anything I wanted or requested offered by the board" (SFI, 5/6/83, p. 1). A second-grade teacher felt that district in-services were unnecessary because the school's own staff people were very talented and that teachers could learn a great deal by working together and sharing ideas (TI, 2/25/83, p. 10).

During the year of our visit, Larkspur had established no new schoolwide teaching goals and therefore had not initiated any school-level in-service programs. But in past years, when Larkspur did organize in-service programs around a particular need for its staff, it could count on district help in putting the programs together (IOI, 5/12/83, Part I). In the past, there had even been retreats where the teaching staff could work on particular skills.

Rolf supported teacher in-service in a variety of ways. When classes were announced, he provided teachers with a list to look over, and he suggested that they take what they liked. He also posted notices of in-service classes on the bulletin boards (Doc., 11/19/82, n.p.; Doc., 1/14/83, n.p.; Doc., 1/24/83, n.p.). According to one second-grade teacher, Rolf "enjoy[ed] seeing teachers go out and take classes" (TI, 2/25/83, p. 6). But other than distributing information and offering general encouragement, "he [didn't] participate in any other way than that" (TI, 3/24/83, p. 7).

Along with in-service classes, some Larkspur teachers expressed interest in taking university classes for credit. A district requirement that teachers notify the administration far in advance for approval, however, seemed to act as an obstacle. One teacher, describing the effect of this requirement, said, "[The district] has totally discouraged us from increasing our teaching skills" (SO, 4/28/83, p. 1). In contrast, some teachers

saw the principal and the district as supportive of teachers' efforts to gain additional certification (SO, 2/25/83, p. 1).

Summary: Larkspur's School Ethos

The wishes of the surrounding community profoundly affected the day-to-day activities at Larkspur Elementary School. The maintenance of the school's building and grounds, the nature of its social and academic curricula, the attitude it expressed toward discipline, and the evaluation of its teachers and students were each influenced, for better or for worse, by the school's parents. So, at the risk of being repetitive, we will quote Principal Jonathan Rolf again, in order to capture the intensity of the community's feelings about Larkspur Elementary School. Rolf's words were:

> You'd kill yourself professionally if you were not able to meet the demands and expectations of this community. (FN, 2/24/83, p. 5)

As the principal's statement indicates, he was well aware of the importance of pleasing a community that took a great interest in the operations of its school. And the story of Larkspur and Jonathan Rolf seems to suggest that both the school and the principal were, by and large, meeting the demands of the school's parents.

The impeccably maintained school plant with its manicured rose garden reflected the well-groomed aspect of the surrounding neighborhood. Rolf expended much time and effort keeping the grounds and building in good repair. His interest in the school's physical plant was evident to both teachers and students, who routinely approached the principal about maintenance matters.

Rolf's concern about the school's appearance was one facet of his overall approach to school climate. He believed that it was important to convey to students that they were first-rate students and that Larkspur was a first-rate school. He also thought that instilling these beliefs in students would lay the foundation for student academic success. Consequently, Rolf engaged in various activities to increase school pride. He collected money in order to have school flags made for the school and for each classroom; he praised students during assemblies; and he made students aware of local folklore and folk heroes. In Rolf's eyes, part of the principal's job was to be a booster for the school.

The school's strong emphasis on academic achievement resulted from parental pressure and community pride in the school. Not only were most of the school's parents financially well off, but many were also alumni of the school. They expected their children to be successful and that Larkspur would contribute greatly to that success. The benefits of these expectations were numerous. Parents enhanced the school's program by serving as

classroom aides, by lecturing to students about various professions, by helping the school acquire computers, and by organizing classes on student safety. But parent involvement also caused some problems. Teachers and parents tended to regard each other suspiciously, and teachers sometimes found the stress of face-to-face meetings with parents almost unbearable. In response to these tensions, Rolf often acted as a buffer between parents and teachers. He sought to smooth ruffled feathers and clear up misunderstandings.

Yet, the occasional complaints about parent demands did not prevent teachers from sharing the community's vision of success. They regularly pushed their classes through the district's academic requirements at a rapid pace to ensure that students would do well on the annual standardized tests. Rolf kept himself apprised of student achievement by monitoring test results and by talking informally with students and teachers. He did not, however, directly intervene in classroom instruction, because he regarded his teachers as experts and trusted them to handle matters within the classroom.

Larkspur's students reacted to this pressure to succeed in different ways. Many were self-disciplined; the desire to do well kept them on task during class time. As a result, most teachers viewed their students in a positive light and believed that extreme disciplinary measures were unwarranted. In fact, the school's disciplinary code prohibited after-school detention and corporal punishment. A small minority of students, however, responded negatively to this pressure and became disruptive. In anticipation of possible problems, some teachers used games and rewards to release the tension that often accumulated during the school day. When these measures were ineffective, teachers could count on the principal for assistance. But teachers also encountered some difficulties with parents when more extensive disciplinary action was required. For example, some teachers did not keep disciplinary records because they claimed that parents viewed the records as ways of picking on kids.

In his approach to discipline, the principal stressed problem solving. He attempted to keep any disciplinary incidents from escalating by working out solutions in conjunction with the students involved. Students were often ready to cooperate with the principal because they did not want their parents called in. Nonetheless, Rolf kept careful records of his disciplinary actions in case it became necessary to summon parents.

As might be expected at a school in which academic achievement was stressed, student grades were important. Other schools in the district regarded Larkspur as having extremely exacting standards. In truth, although formal grading criteria were set by the district, Larkspur's teachers often worked out their own standards depending upon subject matter and overall class performance. Despite their reputation for toughness, however, Larkspur's teachers rarely retained students. The retention process was an elaborate one in which the principal,

parents, and teachers took part. And even when retention was recommended, parents had ultimate say about whether a child would be held back.

The community's desires also affected how Larkspur's teachers were evaluated. The district's accountability program specified procedures for evaluating teachers, but the willingness of Larkspur's parents to express preferences for, and aversions to, individual teachers seemed a more potent force in assessing a staff member's performance. Through letters requesting particular assignments for their children, parents often praised teachers whom they liked and criticized those they did not care for. During the year of our study, two teachers about whom many parents had complained were placed on remediation by the principal. Rolf did, however, support a third teacher who had been singled out for complaint because he thought she was a good teacher. Rolf's support for the third teacher suggests that the sway of community was not always absolute.

In summary, Larkspur was a school strongly influenced by its community. The middle- and upper middle-class parents of Larkspur's students had definite ideas of what they wanted from a school, and Larkspur's principal and teachers attempted to respond to these demands. Principal and staff worked to see that Larkspur's students did well academically. In doing so, they often extended the notion of success beyond the academic sphere and sought to give students self-pride, practical knowledge, and an ability to think critically. That Larkspur's staff viewed these other outcomes as additional ways to spur academic achievement is further indication that the principal and teachers shared the community's vision of success. In fact, this sense of sharing was so profound that the principal and many of the teachers stated that they would rather work at Larkspur than at any other school.

PATTERNS AND PROCESSES IN THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER

Finding Instructional Leadership in Principals' Routine Actions

We want to remind the reader, after this long descriptive narrative about Jonathan Rolf and Larkspur Elementary School, that our collaboration with this principal and others began as we sought to understand the principal's role in instructional leadership and management. We turned first to prior research about principals and found a major contradiction: While descriptive studies argued that the work of principals is varied, fragmented, and little concerned with instructional matters (Peterson, 1978; Pitner, 1982; Sproull, 1979), effective-school studies proffered the centrality of principals in the development of potent instructional organizations (Armor et al., 1976; Brookover & Lezotte, 1977; Edmonds, 1979).

Attempting to resolve this enigma, we interviewed dozens of principals and completed an intensive, eight-week pilot study. Based on these preliminary efforts, we strongly suspected that principals could be key agents in the creation of successful instructional settings:

> The intensiveness of the method employed in [our pilot studies] has allowed a very different concept of leadership behavior to emerge. This concept is one that visualizes instructional leadership accruing from the repetition of routine and mundane acts performed in accord with principals' overarching perspectives on schooling.
>
> If such is the case, research procedures must be finely tuned and pervasive enough in the school to reveal those behaviors and trace their effects. A lack of such thorough and field-based procedures may account for the frequent report that principals are not effective instructional leaders or that they do not occupy themselves with instructional matters. (Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983, p. 57)

This statement contained both conceptual and methodological premises that were distinct from those embodied in other studies about school principals.

Conceptually, we began our yearlong studies of principals attuned to the importance of routine activities like the ones we had noted during our pilot work: monitoring, controlling and exchanging information, planning, interacting with students, hiring and training staff, and overseeing building maintenance. We had written about these behaviors:

> These are the routine and mundane acts through which principals can assess the working status of their organizations and the progress of their schools relative to long-term goals. They are the acts which allow principals to alter the course of events midstream: to return aberrant student behavior to acceptable norms; to suggest changes in teaching style or intervene to demonstrate a preferred form of instruction; to develop student, teacher, or community support for programs already underway; to develop an awareness of changes in the organization that must be made in the future. (Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983, p. 54)

The "success" of these actions for instructional management, we wrote, "hinges . . . on the principal's capacity to connect them to the instructional system" (p. 54), for we had found that the principals with whom we worked believed that they could and did influence the instructional systems in their schools.

We also found that each of our principals held a working theory of his or her instructional system--an overarching perspective--that guided his or her actions. Those overarching perspectives were complex constellations of personal experiences, community and district "givens," principals' behaviors, and instructional climate and organization variables that offered both direct and circuitous routes along which principals could influence their schools and the daily experiences of their students. (Our generalized model is illustrated in Figure 1 in the Foreword.)

The purposes of principals' actions, however, were not always transparent, and the consequences of their activities were not necessarily immediate. In addition, the impact of routine behaviors might be cumulative. We would have to watch the same actions again and again before we could see any noticeable change in the instructional systems of our schools. Thus, finding the subtle linkages between principals' actions and instructional outcomes in schools would require the most intensive effort we could mount--we needed to spend as much time as possible in our schools, and we needed to question participants in the scenes we

witnessed about their interactions and about the purposes and outcomes of principals' actions.

We accomplished this intensive examination of the daily work of principals primarily through a combination of observation and interview procedures which we called the shadow and the reflective interview. (See the companion volume, Methodology, for a full description of these procedures.) The intensive application of the full range of our inquiry activities aligned our work with the research tradition variously called educational ethnography, participant observation, or case study by its leading practitioners (e.g., Becker, Greer, Hughes, & Strauss, 1961; Cicourel et al., 1974; L. M. Smith, 1978; Spindler, 1982; Walker, 1932; Wax, Wax, & DuMont, 1964).

We spent over one thousand hours in our 12 schools, an effort which yielded approximately 10,000 pages of descriptive material about the work of principals. When we analyzed this body of material simply to discover what principals do, we found that their activities could be broken down into nine categories of principals' routine behaviors:

Goal Setting & Planning: Defining or determining future outcomes. Making decisions about, or formulating means for, achieving those ends.

Monitoring: Reviewing, watching, checking, being present without a formal evaluation intended.

Evaluating: Appraising or judging with regard to persons, programs, material, etc. May include providing feedback.

Communicating: Various forms of verbal exchange, including greeting, informing, counseling, commenting, etc. May also include forms of nonverbal communication such as physical contacts, gestures, and facial expressions.

Scheduling, Allocating Resources, & Organizing: Making decisions about allocations of time, space, materials, personnel, and energy. Arranging or coordinating projects, programs, or events.

Staffing: Hiring and placement of teaching staff, specialists, and support personnel.

Modeling: Demonstrating teaching techniques or strategies of interaction for teachers, other staff, parents, or students.

Governing: Decision making with regard to policy. Legislating, enforcing policy or rules.

Filling In: Substituting for another staff member (nurse, maintenance person, secretary, teacher) on a temporary basis.

We found that well over 50% of our observations of principals fit the Communicating category and that Monitoring, Scheduling/ Allocating Resources/Organizing, and Governing encompassed most of our remaining observations. Analyzing our interviews with teachers about what principals do produced nearly an identical profile.

Our profiles of what principals <u>do</u> in their schools--their behaviors--illustrate, again, what many others have reported: Principals' activities are typically very short, face-to-face interactions with students, teachers, parents, or other participants in school organizations; their interactions usually occur almost anywhere but in their own offices; and the topics of their interactions change frequently and abruptly. A study by Morris, Crowson, Hurwitz, and Porter-Gehrie (1982), for example, reported that the principal's day is composed of "school monitoring behaviors," "serving as school spokesperson," "serving the school staff internally as a disseminator of information," and "serving the school as both disturbance handler and resource allocator" (p. 689). After a Mintzberg-type study of the activities of school principals, other researchers (Martin & Willower, 1981) likened the principal's work to private sector management. They, too, found that principals' work is characterized by "variety, brevity, and fragmentation" (p. 79), and that a preponderance (84.8%) of the activities of the principals who participated in their study involved "purely verbal elements" (p. 80).

These researchers concluded from their observations that the principal's role as an instructional leader is relatively minor. Morris et al. stated that "instructional leadership (in terms of classroom observation and teacher supervision) is <u>not</u> the central focus of the principalship" (p. 689), while Martin and Willower reported:

> Perhaps the most widely heralded role of the principal is that of instructional leader, which conjures up images of a task routine dominated by the generation of innovative curricula and novel teaching strategies. The principals in this study spent 17.4% of their time on instructional matters. . . . The majority of the routine education of youngsters that occurred in the schools was clearly the province of the teaching staff. (p. 83)

Another recent study by Newburg and Glatthorn (1983) also concluded that "for the most part principals do not provide instructional leadership" (p. v).

The major problem with these studies, we believe, lies in an overly narrow conception of instructional leadership that is implicitly rational and bureaucratic, despite the fact that principals work in organizations that have been described as "loosely coupled" (Meyer & Rowan, 1978; Weick, 1976) and even "disorderly" (Perrow, 1982). Only those behaviors that were directly and formally concerned with instruction were examined, and researchers acknowledged that they could make little sense of the vast majority of principals' activities. The Morris group wrote:

> Everything seems to blend together in an undifferentiated jumble of activities that are presumably related, however remotely, to the ongoing rhythm and purpose of the larger enterprise. (1982, p. 689)

The major purpose of our study was to untangle that previously "undifferentiated jumble" of principal behaviors to see how the principal influenced instruction through the culture of the school (Firestone & Wilson, 1983) or through the exercise of routine activities (Dwyer, Lee, Rowan, & Bossert, 1983). To take this necessary step, we examined the meanings principals and other participants in the school settings attributed to principals' activities. As both Greenfield (1982) and Bridges (1982) had recommended, we probed for the antecedents and consequences of principals' behaviors.

We considered the entire range of behaviors from the thousands of pages that we had acquired during our yearlong study, looking for the purposes of those acts--the targets of principals' activities. The reflective interviews proved to be the most revealing documents, since they captured insiders' perspectives about the meanings of principals' actions. Again, we produced a list of categories that encompassed all of our episodes. These "targets" or purposes included:

> **Work Structure:** All components related to the task of delivering instruction.
>
> **Staff Relations:** Outcomes concerning the feelings and/or personal needs of individual staff members.
>
> **Student Relations:** Outcomes concerning the feelings, attitudes, or personal needs (academic, social, or psychological) of students.
>
> **Safety & Order:** Features of the physical organization, rules, and procedures of the

school that influence the safety of members and the capacity of members to carry out their work.

Plant & Equipment: Elements of the physical plant such as the building, grounds, audiovisual equipment, office machines, etc.

Community Relations: Outcomes concerning the attitudes and involvement of parents or other community members.

Institutional Relations: Outcomes related to the district office, other schools, or other formal organizations outside the school.

Institutional Ethos: School culture or spirit. May refer to features of the school program or to a "tone" that contributes to the school's unique identity and constitutes shared meaning among members of the school organization.

Combining the nine types of routine behaviors previously discussed with these eight targets or purposes provided a matrix of 72 discrete action cells. Combining behavior with purpose in this manner helped reveal patterns in the previously chaotic impressions of principals' actions. Sometimes these patterns were related to contextual or personal idiosyncrasies in the settings; sometimes they could be attributed to principals' carefully reasoned approaches. But in all instances, we found interesting leadership stories, where principals strived within their limits to set conditions for, or the parameters of, instruction.

In this manner, we believe we have taken a significant step in revealing various ways in which principals can exercise instructional leadership. The remaining section of this case study of Principal Jonathan Rolf discusses the results of our analysis of his routine behaviors and illustrates the manner in which we believe Rolf led the instructional program at his school.

Rolf's Enactment of Instructional Leadership

We have related the disparate opinions about the role of the principal as instructional leader found in the research literature. Further, we have noted the importance we place on the routine actions of principals, which other researchers have called an "undifferentiated jumble"; we believe that principals can use these routine activities to influence significantly the instructional organization of their schools. In this final section of the Jonathan Rolf case study, we will delve into that jumble, find an order that is related to the specific context in

which Rolf worked, and disclose a cogent picture of Rolf's role as instructional leader at Larkspur Elementary School.

By introducing Larkspur's setting and actors, portraying a day in the life of Jonathan Rolf, and describing the instructional climate and organization of the school, we presented a plethora of details about Larkspur School. The purpose of our narrative was to give the reader a holistic impression of this setting and principal. Yet, while the narrative does provide the necessary background for our story of instructional leadership, we must now construe the data to illuminate Rolf's role and the impact of his routine actions in that organization.

After completing the field portion of our study, we sorted the hundreds of Rolf's activities that we observed into the nine behavior categories established in our analysis (see pages 65-66); the result is presented in Figure 5 (p. 70), "Distribution of Principal Rolf's Routine Behaviors." This figure illustrates what Rolf did in his school during the time we spent there. In this display, we can see that Rolf's routine behaviors, like those of every other principal in our study, were predominately acts of communication (44.0%). One easily recalls from the narrative the number of instances in which Rolf discussed the school's program with concerned parents, sought information about students' progress from teachers, or interacted with children in the hallways and on the playground.

Figure 5 also shows that substantial numbers of Rolf's activities could be described as acts of Monitoring (20.6%), Scheduling/Allocating Resources/Organizing (12.1%), Governing (9.9%), Filling In (5.4%), and Goal Setting and Planning (4.8%). Specific examples of these types of generalized behaviors can be recalled from the narrative. On occasion, Rolf delivered messages to classrooms--pausing long enough to observe activities in progress. Or sometimes he visited classes, guitar in hand, to teach the students songs and folklore. He regularly supervised the playground or lunchroom. He arranged for teachers to share audiovisual equipment, or in conjunction with community members, he organized special events at the school. And when the need arose, he helped resolve conflicts between students, between teachers and students, and between teachers and parents. Figure 5 illustrates that Rolf used Evaluation (1.9%), Modeling (1.3%), and Staffing (0.0%)--at least the year we were in the school--relatively infrequently.

Although this breakdown of Rolf's behaviors highlights his preference for conducting school business face-to-face, it does not reveal the purposes of his activities or the consequences of his acts. The next step in understanding principals' roles is to discover why they do what they do. On pages 67-68, we described eight categories of purposes to which principals, teachers, and students assigned the behaviors of the principals that we witnessed in our 12 research settings. These meanings, when

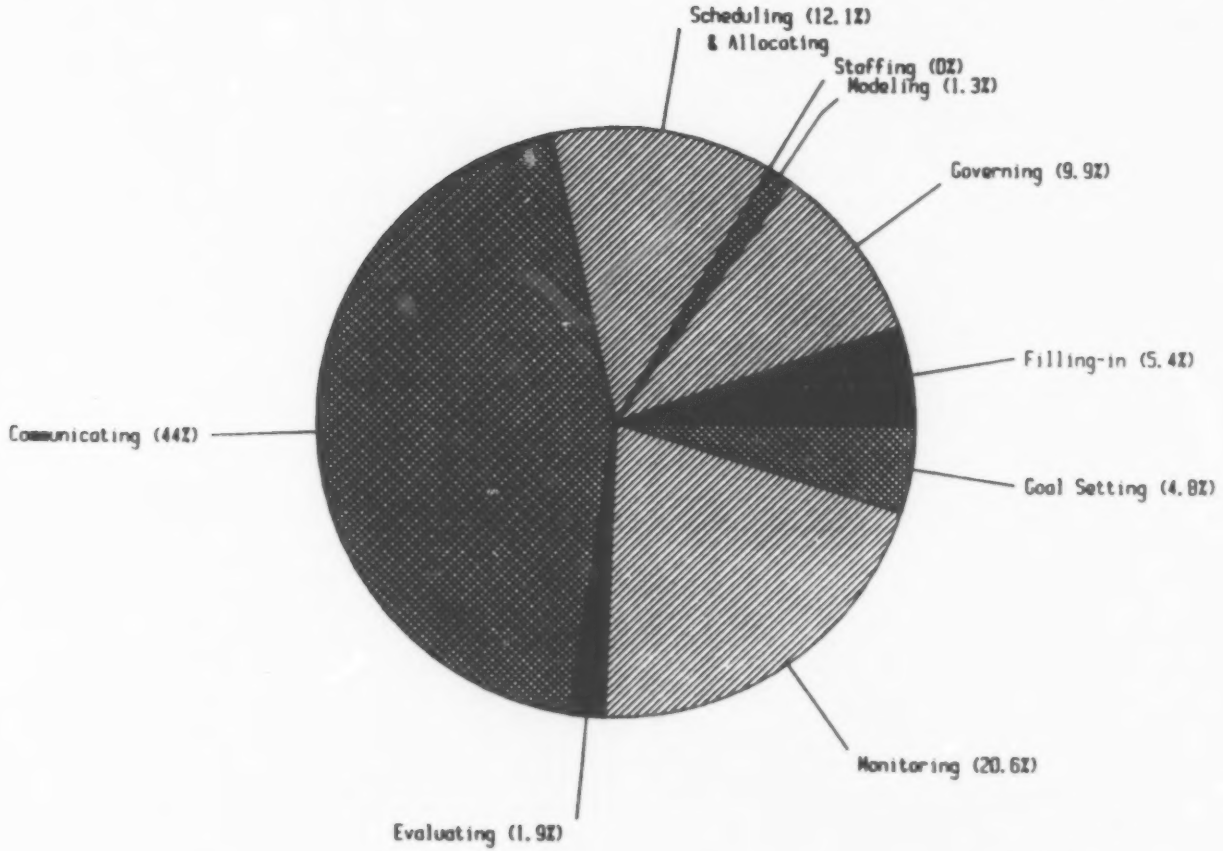

Figure 5: Distribution of Principal Rolf's Routine Behaviors

combined with principals' behaviors, disclose purposeful actions where previous researchers saw only an "undifferentiated jumble."

The five largest clusters of Rolf's actions, when examined in sequence, reveal that the primary target of his most routine behaviors was Larkspur's work structure, comprising all those proximal or distal components related to the delivery of instruction. (See Figures 6, 7, 8, and 9 on pages 72, 73, 74, and 75.) In fact, 32% of Rolf's activities were aimed at influencing some aspect of the work structure. The same figures indicate that his next largest target category was safety and order and that very few (2%) of his activities involved the central office. Interestingly, the remainder of the episodes we witnessed while shadowing Rolf were almost evenly distributed among Student Relations, Staff Relations, Plant and Equipment, Community Relations, and Institutional Ethos.

Another way to examine Rolf's actions is to focus on the 72 combinations of principal behaviors and targets in our analytic scheme. This analysis reveals that most of Rolf's actions (68%) fell into only 10 of those cells. Rank ordered, his most routine activities included:

Monitoring/Work Structure (9%)
Communicating/Community Relations (8%)
Communicating/Staff Relations (8%)
Communicating/Student Relations (8%)
Communicating/Work Structure (8%)
Monitoring/Safety & Order (7%)
Communicating/School Ethos (6%)
Scheduling, Allocating, & Organizing/Work Structure (6%)
Governing/Safety & Order (5%)
Monitoring/Plant & Equipment (3%)

If we begin with this analysis of Rolf's most routine actions as principal of Larkspur Elementary School and add to it the array of facts presented in the narrative about the school's setting and actors--the community and district, Rolf's own background and beliefs, the nature of the instructional climate and organization at Larkspur, and Rolf's aspirations for his school and his students--we get a very complete picture of Larkspur Elementary School. The meaning or purpose of Rolf's "jumble" of routine actions also becomes patently clear.

The general model we illustrated in Figure 1 (p. v) can be used to frame an overarching perspective of instructional management at Larkspur. The community and institutional context "boxes" indicate fundamental system "givens," aspects of the Larkspur context that Rolf could not usually control and that influenced his decisions. Important characteristics of the community that Larkspur served included an ethnically homogeneous, middle- and upper middle-class population; a majority of parents who worked as professionals; a tradition of high parental expectations for the school; and a high level of student academic achievement. Another "given" for Rolf was the

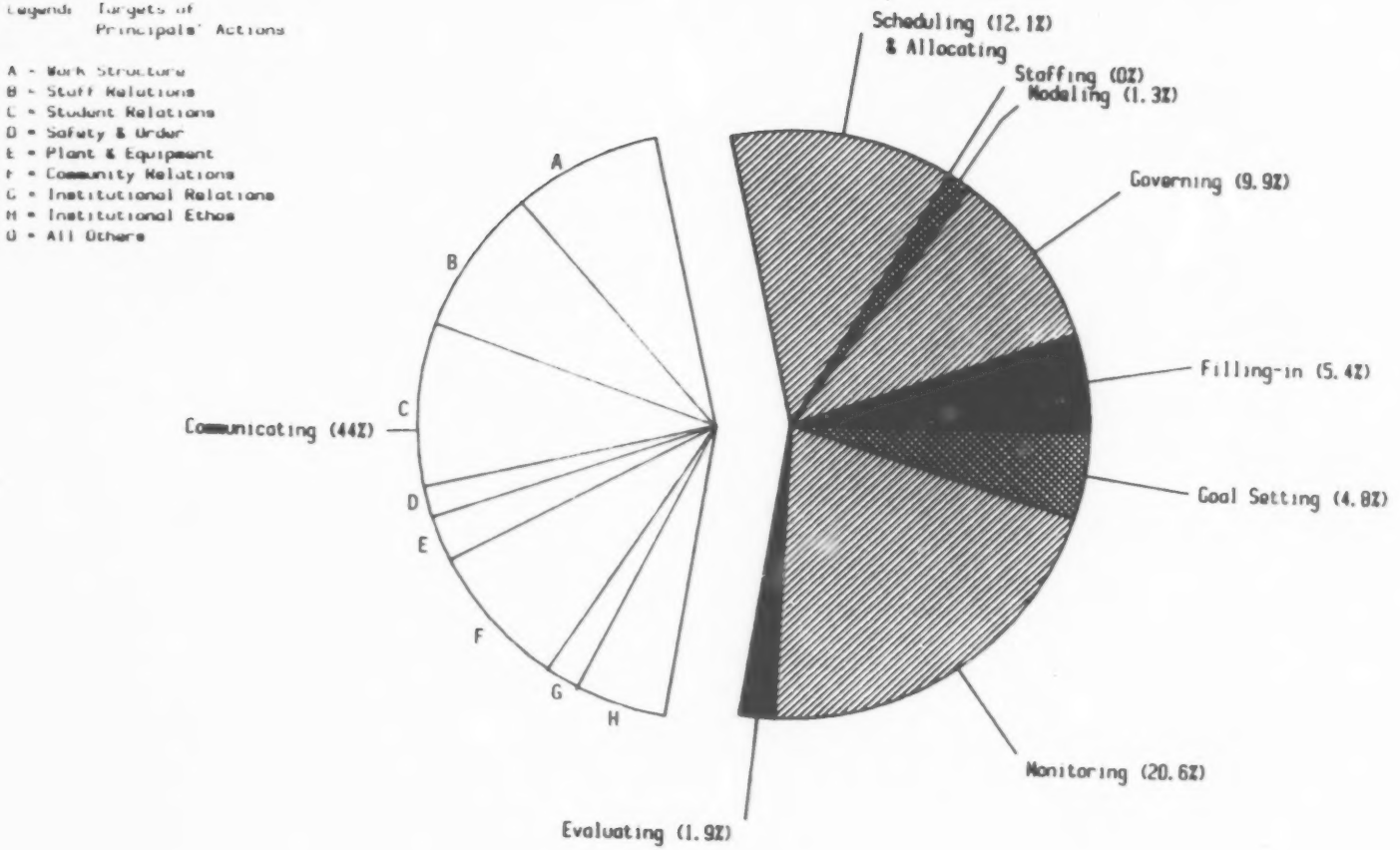

Figure 6: Distribution of Principal Rolf's Routine Actions: Communicating

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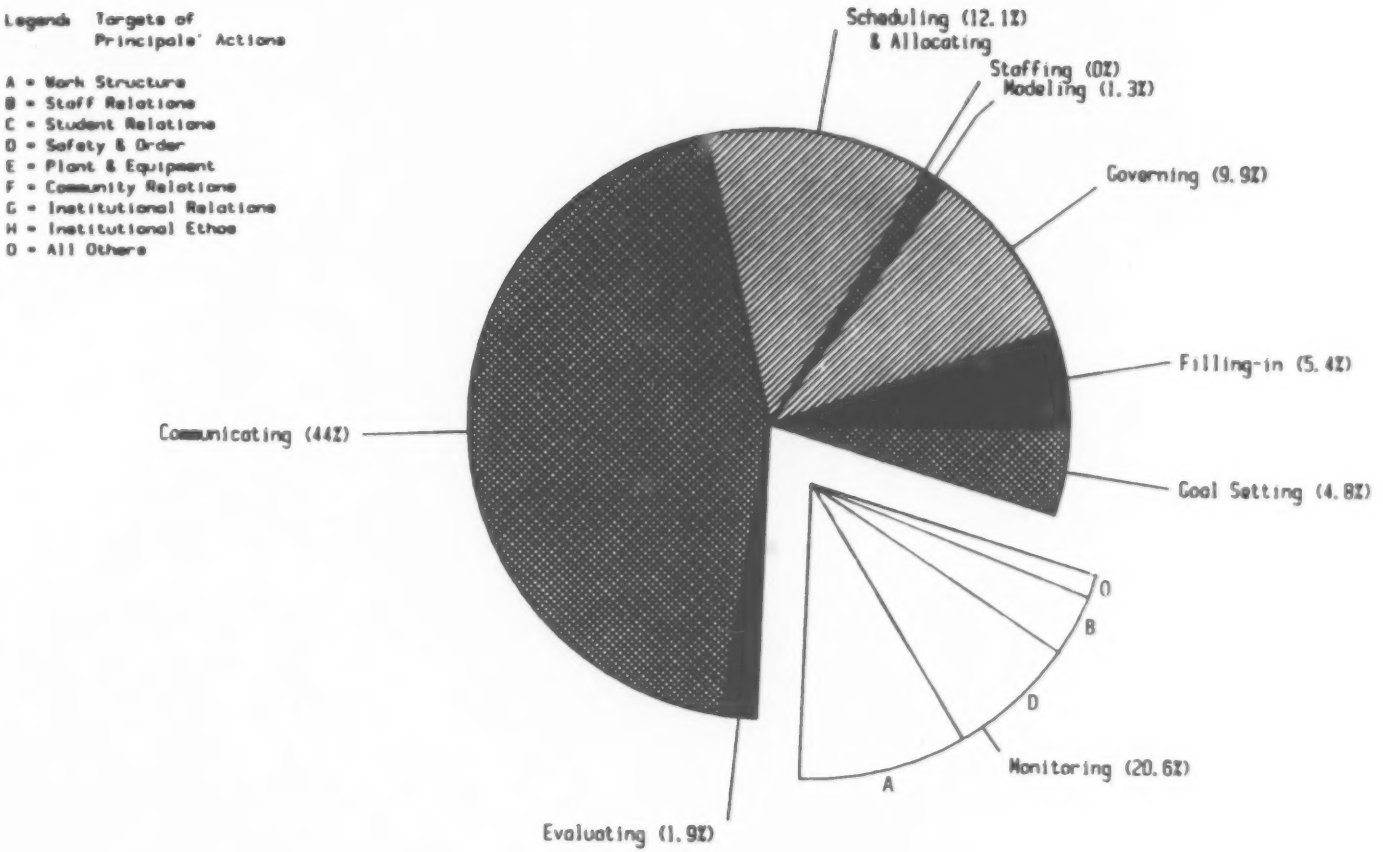

Figure 7: Distribution of Principal Rolf's Routine Actions: Monitoring

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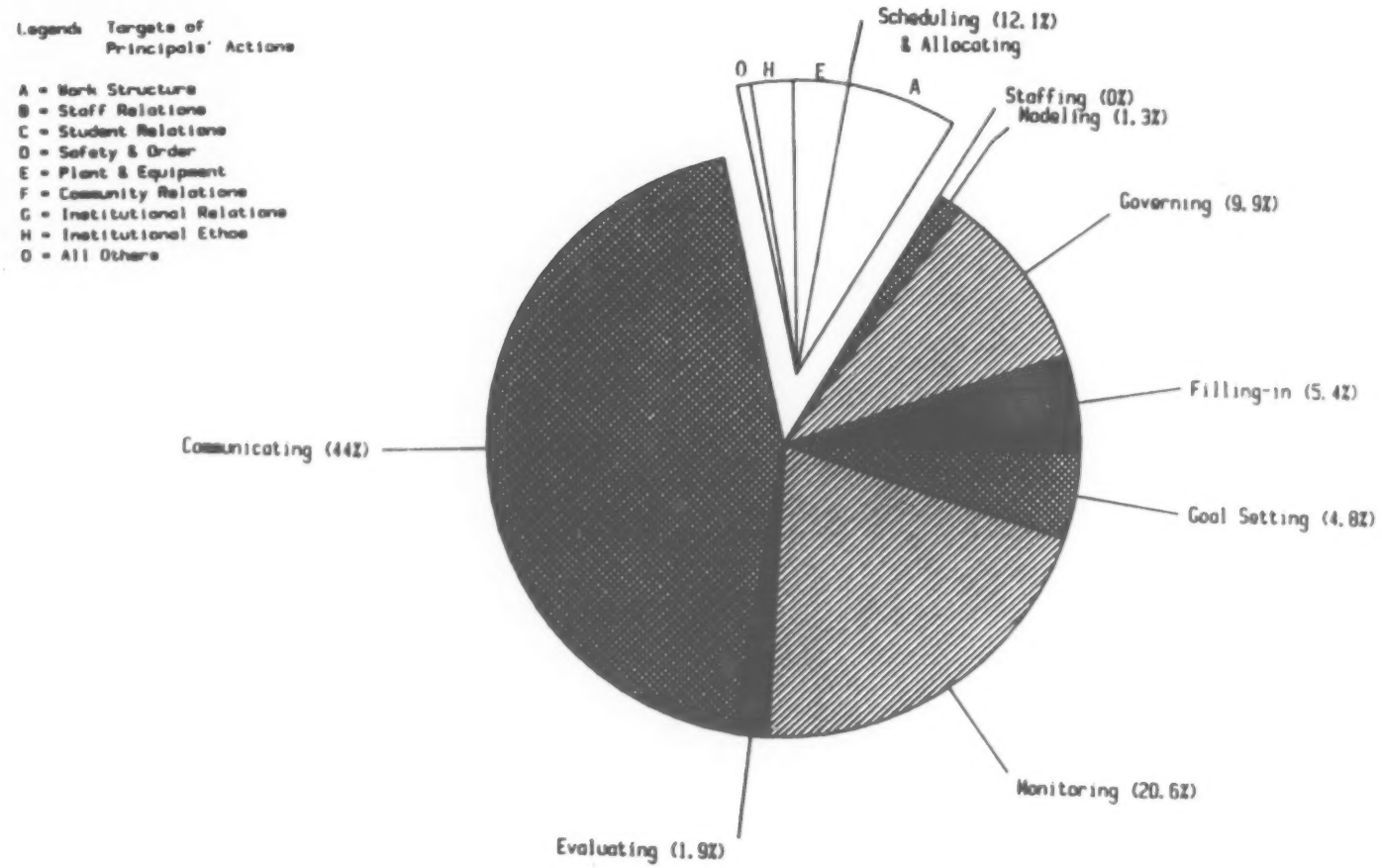

Figure 8: Distribution of Principal Rolf's Routine Actions: Scheduling, Allocating Resources, and Organizing

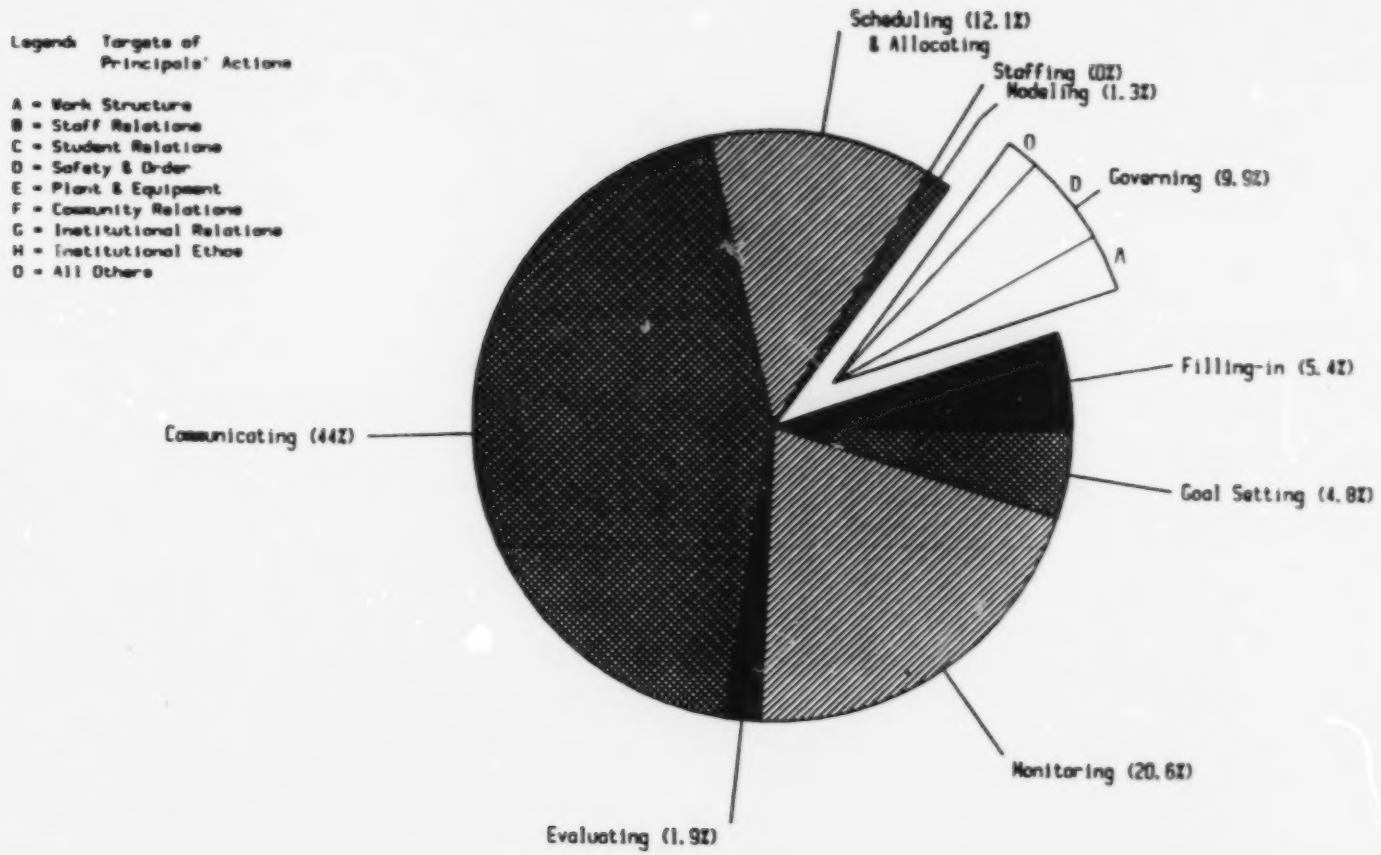

Figure 9: Distribution of Principal Rolf's Routine Actions: Governing

relative lack of influence his district exercised on the nature of instruction at the school. The district may have reasoned that as long as this outspoken and powerful community remained happy with the Larkspur program, there was no need to interfere with school-level instruction.

Rolf's own professional experience and personal philosophy were also important "givens" in determining his actions as Larkspur's principal. Although Rolf's teaching experience had not resulted in an interest in, or mastery of, elementary teaching or curriculum, it had given him a passion for working with young children and a knowledge of how to draw them out, place them at ease, and help them to enjoy their school experiences. Always cognizant of his community's push for academic excellence and high student achievement, Rolf remained adamant about the need to help Larkspur's youngsters cope with parental pressure. This goal, the importance he placed on developing the children's appreciation of both the moral and political roots of their American heritage, and the influence of the community led him to develop the many ceremonies and contests that were held during the school year.

Another major "given" in the Larkspur instructional system was its teaching staff. The composition of the staff, rather than being a consequence of Rolf's actions and beliefs, was another force with which he had to deal. For the most part, Larkspur's teachers were an experienced lot, set in their ways, resistant to criticisms or suggestions from the principal or from the many parents who freely offered their opinions about how classes should be taught.

Understanding the web of tensions that existed in this affluent, suburban school among zealous parents, entrenched teachers, and children who were under constant pressure to achieve was perhaps Rolf's forte and gave him the ability to maneuver successfully within that web. His ability to buffer each group from the demands of the others and to maintain a balance that allowed quality schooling to continue in the best interests of the students was the very reason most of his teachers doubted that this school would have been as an attractive working environment without Rolf's influence. In the next sections we summarize how the principal's activities did or did not contribute to a workable instructional climate and instructional organization at Larkspur.

Maintaining the Instructional Climate: In our other studies of successful principals, we began this section and the one that follows it with the verb "establishing." The decision to substitute "maintaining" in this case signals a very important fact: Principals working in established, upper middle-class schools may have little latitude in shaping their organizations. Instead, community expectations tend to erode principals' prerogatives. Certainly at Larkspur, Jonathan Rolf was well aware of the limitations that this vocal community placed on his

actions as principal. Expressing his view of his "articulate" and "influential" community, he said:

> If there is something that they are displeased about, everybody will know about it . . . so maybe I feel [more] anxious to have the community support. That's crucial to whether the principal will remain at this school. (TI, 11/12/82, p. 7)

Another important aspect of Rolf's case--and one which further supports our use of the verb "maintaining"--was the nature of Larkspur's teaching staff. His teachers were experienced and well entrenched in their positions. During the year of our observation, we saw no instances of Rolf assigning staff members to classrooms or grade levels. Additionally, most staff members were highly resistant to any intervention in their classroom routines. We believe that this resistance stemmed, in part, from the staff's response to frequent attempts by Larkspur's well-intentioned parents to intrude into instructional matters. The reader will recall that teachers as well as the principal were very sensitive to community pressure. Some teachers even displayed symptoms of stress during parent conference days. Yet, though teachers may have been reacting to the parents rather than the principal, their tendency to resent intervention further decreased Rolf's ability to function as a creative instructional leader.

This combination of factors--community expectation and teacher resistance--placed Rolf in what one teacher called a "very real bind" (FN, 3/7/83, p. 2). This teacher went on to explain:

> If [Rolf] can't get the teachers to do all the wonderful things that the community expects from its school, he fails in the view of the community, and as he has said, that is "suicidal." (FN, 3/7/83, p. 2)

The word "suicidal" was apt because Larkspur's powerful and vocal community had the ear of the district office. Rolf's superintendent would readily transfer a principal who failed to keep these parents pleased. Thus, Rolf's district acted as a third constraint on the principal's ability to shape the instructional climate. Rolf, so fond of railroads and train lore, might well have said that his track ran straight and very, very narrow.

Thus, maintaining a climate that had long been associated with Larkspur was an essential part of Rolf's job. This meant not only providing a school environment that was conducive to learning but also projecting an image of the school that signalled its appropriateness for the socioeconomic status of its client population. Examining Rolf's routine actions demonstrated

the importance he placed on climate maintenance during the year we were in the school.

Twenty-five percent of Rolf's actions involved mostly verbal communications with students, teachers, and community members. These exchanges were aimed at maintaining or improving positive relationships among students, among teachers, between students and teachers, and between parents and teachers. In short, the principal directed one quarter of his efforts towards keeping these groups happy and working productively.

It is interesting to note that Rolf's goal did not necessarily involve bringing members of these groups together to work out their differences--particularly when parents and staff members were involved. Instead, he often sought to buffer one group from the other. Typically, he dealt with individuals in his office and absorbed their complaints there. By doing so, he prevented anxieties from spilling out and affecting other, already sensitive or stressed groups or individuals. Although this strategy kept staff and parents happy, it left Rolf a weary juggler. The anxiety he exhibited prior to parent conferences and each time the telephone rang provided clear evidence of the difficulties of Rolf's position.

Whereas buffering seemed to be Rolf's reactive strategy for maintaining his school's positive climate, conveying Larkspur's ethos through a variety of school ceremonies seemed to be his proactive tack. The principal used traditional ceremonies, such as the Founder's Day celebration, and events he helped to establish to build and maintain school pride. In fact, Larkspur's regular schedule included more numerous and elaborate programs than did any other school in which we studied.

During the year, many major events were held, each of which required parent planning meetings, classroom preparations, student rehearsals, and monetary contributions by students. These activities seemed to provide constructive or benign outlets for parent involvement, and neutral grounds on which the sometimes antagonistic Larkspur teachers and parents could meet and share good feelings about their school. For those parents who had little time to be involved in the school on a day-to-day basis, the celebrations provided ritualistic demonstrations of contented students participating in the traditions and values of their community and country. These programs were not, however, without costs: Class time and extra work for teachers were required. Although teachers sometimes complained, they seemed to understand the importance of the programs, and they always participated.

If conveying a particular image was a major purpose of Larkspur's many special programs, the same rationale stood behind the attention Rolf and his teachers paid to the school's physical plant and grounds. The school was a mainstay of the community; three generations of neighborhood children had passed through its halls. And when the district made a proposal to close this older

building and relocate the school to newer, more modern facilities, the community had vociferously and effectively opposed the proposition. Thus, the building itself was an important community symbol. In this light, our glimpses of Rolf as he tended the rose garden, picked up glass shards from the playground, or responded instantly when a teacher reported seeing a mouse in her classroom all support our conjecture that, to a large degree, this community shaped this principal's role.

Maintenance of the school plant was a responsibility that figured prominently in the jobs of all of the principals with whom we worked. Other principals, however, were concerned about fundamental issues like whether the furnace would heat a building for the day. The difference between this kind of plant management and that practiced by Rolf is illustrated in an incident cited earlier in which the principal, in response to a teacher's request, paid the building custodian extra for washing desk tops. The fact that other teachers usually did this job themselves made this teacher's request extraordinary. But Rolf's acquiescence demonstrated both his concern for the appearance of his classrooms as well as his desire to appear responsive to the requests of his staff. Appearance in all its aspects was a significant issue at Larkspur.

In this discussion of Jonathan Rolf's role and purpose in the maintenance of Larkspur's climate, there is no question that pleasing the community is the dominant theme. There is, however, an important undercurrent, which also begins with the expectations of parents and the pressure created by those expectations. This story, however, focuses on students and Rolf's efforts to buffer children from the ill effects of parental demands for academic excellence. In this story, the principal becomes his students' champion--in his words, he becomes their "booster" (TI, 11/12/82, p. 7).

In the other school settings in which we worked, we encountered many forms of parental neglect or abuse of their children. It comes, perhaps, as a surprise to find forms of these problems in an almost storybook school like Larkspur. As evidence that these problems existed, Rolf recounted reports of elementary school children with ulcers. He also attributed the relatively small number of student discipline problems with which he dealt to parental pressure to achieve. Finally, he noted that the children were overprotected and consequently suffered from poor self-concepts.

In this light, we suggest that many of Rolf's interactions with students--playing ball on the playground, playing songs on his guitar, telling folktales during classroom time, wearing a gorilla suit in the Halloween Parade (without a mask to avoid scaring the younger children), or even presiding over the many Larkspur celebrations--were geared to counteract the effects of parental pressure. Although one might readily conclude that in a school of this type the principal had nothing better to do, we posit that Rolf wanted these children to develop their own pride

in themselves and the school. He wanted to give them an inner strength that would carry them far beyond Larkspur. He said:

> I'd say maybe what we're trying to do here is help these children reach their maximum capabilities and prepare them--give them the tools to get further education, go out and face the world. I guess we're just trying to prepare these kids and give them everything they need to have to be successful in life. (TI. 10/29/82, p. 6)

His interactions with students served to make Larkspur an appealing place to be and learn, not because the parents declared that it was so, but because students themselves enjoyed the school and found their experiences worthwhile. To bring this about, Rolf treated students as individuals, recognizing when to report their transgressions to parents or when to let things slide. During playground duty, he also knew when to involve an isolated child with his or her peers or when to engage the child in some game himself. Although Rolf could have easily maintained an executive image at Larkspur by ensconcing himself in his office, he chose an interactive role instead. His choice, though quite stressful for him, allowed him to satisfy the community's desire to have a prestigious school for their children, and it allowed him to promote and nurture the growth of each child.

Maintaining the Instructional Organization: Again, maintaining rather than establishing is a more appropriate way to describe Principal Rolf's role as it related to the instructional organization at Larkspur. For the very same reasons that we discussed in the previous section, Rolf took little or no initiative in shaping the school's instructional program. During the year we worked at Larkspur, neither Rolf nor anyone else introduced a single change in the curriculum or in the instructional process. Moreover, no changes were being contemplated for the future.

In large measure, the district made decisions about instructional content and grade-level standards at each school. The district determined the series of texts from which schools could select those they liked. It also administered the annual tests to see that schools were meeting the minimum requirements. Yet, as we have indicated time and time again, the standards of the Larkspur community were more binding and exacting than those of the district. Consequently, day-to-day classroom practices at Larkspur tended to reflect teachers' attempts to accommodate the desires of parents.

Teachers felt compelled to respond to parents because they believed that if a parent deemed his or her child's test scores insufficient, the parent would exert the necessary pressure to have the teacher dismissed. One teacher accurately summarized the feelings of her colleagues by saying, "If I don't have good test marks, I've got to answer" (TI, 2/5/83, p. 12). In fact,

parental complaints rather than his own evaluations were what usually prompted the principal to investigate classroom practice. Significantly, the two Larkspur teachers who were placed on remediation at the end of the 1982-83 school year had received heavy criticism from parents.

To forestall parental criticism and give their capable students the best chance to score highly on the April exams, Larkspur's staff--quite independently of Rolf--raced their students through the standard text series. Some completed the usual complement of yearly work prior to Christmas! From that point on, teachers provided supplementary instruction, using other texts, their own materials, and sometimes lessons from the next year's curriculum. In addition, many staff members introduced sample achievement tests and enrichment materials that specifically focused on areas the April exam would cover in order to prepare their students for that event. Rolf's role in all this was to help provide additional materials and protect as much instructional time from interruption as possible. He said:

> I guess my role is supporting what the teachers do with curriculum, or supporting the curriculum by providing materials, pencils, and papers, and giving the teachers time to teach with as little interruption as possible. . . . [Responsibility for instruction] rests with the teacher. (I, 11/4/82, p. 26)

Thus, we find an explanation for the fact that more of Rolf's actions were characterized as Monitoring/Work Structure than Communicating/Work Structure. Although the percentage difference was marginal, this was the only school in our study in which monitoring took precedence over communicating for the work structure target. In his role as support person, Rolf needed information about how work proceeded and what would be needed to continue that work. He did not need to communicate about instructional goals, methods, or outcomes as so many of our principals had to do in their attempts to alter their staffs' performances. He did need information from his staff to buffer parent complaints successfully. To this end he did insist that his teachers keep careful records about student progress and their instructional agenda so that he could tap that information in preparation for parent conferences.

Two other areas of importance in the instructional organization, student assignment to classes and student evaluation and promotion, were again areas left to teachers unless conflict with parents arose. Teachers were given first say in regard to student assignment. If parents disagreed (and 56 did the year we were at Larkspur), Rolf would appoint two parents and two teachers to a committee to resolve the question. In the case of promotion and retention, teachers made their recommendations at the end of the year. All retentions were subject to a lengthy review process by the staff and Rolf, but in

the end, each child's parents had the final say. As a result, retention for students was rarely recommended.

Rolf's role in the development of the instructional system at Larkspur, then, was minimal. His efforts were directed toward providing materials for his teachers to ensure that instruction proceeded without interruption. And it was only when conflicts with parents arose that he stepped in to settle matters regarding instruction, evaluation, promotion, and retention.

Conclusion

We have described in great detail Larkspur Elementary School. In doing so, we have presented a school community which was mostly White, very affluent, and highly stable. The school building itself was a landmark in the neighborhood, and many of the parents had walked its halls as children. Moreover, these parents attributed a great deal of their success to their educational experiences at Larkspur, and they expected that the school would do no less for their children.

In great measure, the school seemed to be fulfilling this expectation. The school's staff reflected the surrounding community in both its ethnic makeup and its ideals of success. Teachers were able to push students to high levels of academic achievement, and the school as a whole scored well above district norms on annual standardized tests.

Yet all was not harmonious in the Larkspur setting. Despite the similarities between parents and teachers, each side harbored resentment of the other arising from the issue of parent involvement. Parents were quite willing, in fact eager, to express their opinions on instructional matters in the classroom. They participated at the school in a broad range of activities; they contributed funds for programs and equipment; and they monitored carefully the academic achievement of their children. They were also quick to blame teachers for any slips in student performance. Teachers were, consequently, suspicious of any intervention on the part of parents.

At the center of this web of tensions stood Jonathan Rolf, Larkspur's principal of 10 years. Rolf was a quiet man whose love of working with children had led him into education. Although he had studied elementary curriculum, he disliked the subject and was content to leave curriculum matters to the teachers--a predisposition that suited him for working with Larkspur's experienced, and somewhat embattled, teaching staff. He viewed his teachers as the experts and saw his role as that of supporting their efforts.

Yet he was supremely aware of the need to please the vocal and powerful Larkspur community. He knew that his success as a principal depended upon his ability to meet the demands made by parents. So, rather than present himself as a champion of his teachers, he sought to buffer teachers from parents, and vice

versa. He tried to communicate to each side that he was willing to listen to, and respond to, its concerns. He also tried to explain and smooth out any misunderstandings between the two groups. Rolf worked to keep his teachers happy, but mostly he strove to please the Larkspur community.

As a result of the aspects of the setting mentioned above, Rolf's role as an instructional leader was that of maintaining an instructional climate that had been traditionally associated with the school. He was not expected to establish a new vision of successful schooling. The community had a clearly defined notion of what it regarded as successful education. Similarly, staff members had set ideas about proper instructional methods. Rolf's role, then, was not to change any of these factors but to maintain the status quo. He did so by attempting to ease the tensions between parents and teachers, by building school pride through ceremonies and assemblies, and by carefully monitoring the school's instructional organization in order to be prepared for any problems which might arise. His most significant contribution to the Larkspur setting might have been his ability to support and nurture the school's students who often bore the brunt of their parents' visions of success.

In comparison to other principals we have studied, Rolf may have had considerably less to do. He did not have to instill visions of his idea of success into other actors in the setting, nor did he have to stimulate community involvement in the school. His community was stable, and he did not face problems of transiency, poor academic achievement, or large-scale student misbehavior. Yet, as an instructional leader, Rolf may have been more constrained than any other principal in our set of case studies. Although all of our principals worked with a particular set of "givens," the givens in this case study were remarkably rigid. Affluence, academic success, and staff experience had, by and large, predetermined a course that Rolf could ignore only at his peril.

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